

Ourstory

“The Origin of The Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan”



Founding Board of Directors Executive Committee

Attorney Richard White, Vice President; CPA Jack Martin, Treasurer; State Representative & Michigan Legislative Black Caucus Chair Alma G. Stallworth, Founder & Administrator; First Independence National Bank Chairman Don Davis, Chair and Dr. Charles Tucker, Secretary

Founded by the Honorable Alma G. Stallworth during her tenure in the Michigan Legislature while serving as Chair of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus; the Foundation was established as a 501-c3 tax exempt organization dedicated to the creation and delivery of public policy and service programs which improve the economic circumstances and quality of life for Michigan's African American citizenry.

The Foundation's creation evolved from a segment of socioeconomic and political history which continues to frame both disadvantage and advancement of Black America. At the base of this history and “ourstory” was the understanding of a cross section of Black leaders that intellectual resources were needed to support research independent of partisan politics that was specifically dedicated to the development and implementation of public policy initiatives critical to the well-being of Black people in America and around the globe.

Prior to 1983, when James J. Blanchard was elected Michigan Governor and Gary Owen was elected Speaker to the Michigan House of Representatives, the only African



Secretary of State Richard Austin



Governor James J. Blanchard

American staffers at the State Capitol were those working in the offices of Black legislators. During this time there were no African American policy staffers or fiscal analysts serving on the central staffs of the Michigan House or Senate; and with limited exception, only a meager number worked in State agencies, departments or in private sector governmental affairs capacities.

Without policy perspectives developed specifically by African Americans, for African Americans; Black legislators, the legislature as a whole, and the Executive Branch were limited in both policy perspective and resolution options regarding the challenges facing Michigan's African American community.

In 1984, Representative Stallworth, Senator David Holmes and Senator Jackie Vaughn, III with the assistance of KB Stallworth, a marketing & syndication executive for The Scott Fetzer Company; and Steve Zimmerman, a senior partner in the law firm of Dykema Gossett; extended invitations and convened a meeting with a cross section of Michigan's most successful and respected African Americans to formulate plans for what was to be the newly formed Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan.

Among them was Jack Martin, the principle of the most successful African American accounting firm in Michigan; and Dr Karl Gregory, an economist and professor who had successfully created two African American owned financial institutions; Dr. Charles Tucker, one of the nation's most successful sports agents and psychologists; Atty. Richard White, a principle from one of the nation's most respected African American law firms; and Don Davis, a renowned music producer and song writer who was also the principle shareholder of Michigan's only African American owned bank.

In 1985, these individuals, working in collaboration with the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus, organized the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan's Legislative Internship Program to serve as a feeder system for African Americans interested in the pursuit of public policy related careers in state government. The program would also serve as a "front-line" research program charged with developing solutions to public policy inequities that affected the Black communities of Michigan.



Speaker of the House Gary Owen



Senator David Holmes & Representative Charlie Harrison



KB Stallworth, Morris Hood Sr., Representatives Alma Stallworth & Morris Hood, Jr.



Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young

Revolutionary in its design, the internship program provided 12 academic credits to minority students recruited from Michigan State University, Wayne State University and the University of Michigan for full time public policy support over the course of an academic quarter.

The internship required the completion of a university department head and Black legislator approved research subject and associated paper produced under specific university independent study protocols.

State policies regarding the use of minority contractors, goals of minority procurement, lottery contract expenditure distribution, auto insurance, public and private sector African American appointments, tax reversion, adolescent teen pregnancy, career technical education, drug and smoking prevention are issues that have all been positively impacted by Foundation initiatives stimulated by the Intern Program research.

Today, the Foundations' internship model has been replicated in university systems throughout the nation. Its success in the 1980's has opened the doors for governmental affairs occupations for African American professionals in the legislature, executive branch, fiscal agencies, state departments, and private sector.

While there has been substantial progress, the challenge continues for the Foundation to serve as a critical intellectual link between Michigan policy makers, business leaders, service organizations and the community. There remains a need to frame, refocus and remind decision makers of the critical need for "vertical integration" of African Americans throughout the public policy process to ensure fair and equitable treatment; and move from dependency focused government assistance to investments in family stability, financial independence and the building of generational wealth.

The latter is not only difficult because of the duality of a need for investment that will address the systemic causes of poverty and barriers to capital for Black entrepreneurship. It is also difficult because of the "on-going practice of framing" Black leaders in narratives that reduce their effectiveness.

While the perpetrators will be quick to point out their periodic publishing of positive "Black human interest" stories and occasional acts of positive service; nothing is more revealing about the level of their true interest and



Dr. Calvin Trent



Senators Jackie Vaughn, III, Virgil Smith and Representative Alma Stallworth



Betty Pullium, Atty. Richard White, Don Davis and Dr. Charles Tucker



Robert "Buddy" Battle, Jim Brogdon, Representatives Alma Stallworth and Raymond Hood

empathy for “fair and community valued journalism” than the absence of a single African American journalist in the Michigan Capitol Press Corps. On those “rare” occasions where they had any, it has ALWAYS been limited to one, and for most of the legislature’s existence there have been and remain none. The other “telling” reality is the racist framing the print media in particular engages in is never done by, with the participation of, or assistance from a Black journalist as their input would most certainly provide context that would make the desired “villainy” more difficult to achieve.

We don’t have to “wonder” whether this behavior is part of a White Supremacist culture. J. Edgar Hoover was quite specific about why these tactics are so important to promoting distrust among and of American Americans.

Because of this “truth” the founders of the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan deeply believed that “their history” would never be a fair representation of “ourstory”. Therefore, one of the most consequential elements associated with capturing the true essence of Black life and heroes is the understanding that **a person's true character is defined by their cumulative life choices, not a few isolated successes or failures**. Ourstories are as complex as the layers of oppression, quagmire associated with paths to freedom and limitless snares to reinforce relegation. But that very texture is what makes the intrepid audaciousness of our heroes so magnificently prodigious. Time and again they face personal and societal challenges and failings; but always persist, moving ever forward in “lives committed to life quality elevation of the peoples of African descent”.

The Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan was created out of the minds of a brilliant Black woman and mother that was elected Chair of the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus who more than anything else wanted Black children and families to live in safe, healthy and thriving environments, free of the shackles of self-hatred and doubt that obstructed their potential for greatness. A senior state senator that believed that both political party affiliation for influence and separate Black interest discussions were critical to the achievement of civil rights. A wealthy Black genius that felt collaborative Black intellect was the missing key to creating “our own door” to the American dream; and a young Pan Afrikan executive’s belief that the creation of “a Black institution” dedicated to public policy creation and “strength-based” program implementation was the best way to weaponize intellect for African American success in spite of White Supremacy.



Detroit Councilwoman Erma Henderson and Martha Jean “The Queen” Steinberg



Attorney Dennis Archer, Virgie Rollins and KB Stallworth



State Representatives Juanita Watkins and Nelson Saunders



State Representative Ed Vaughn

The first organizational meeting of the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan began in 1984 among:

The Quadrumvirate 4

State Representative Alma G. Stallworth

Don Davis

Senator David S. Holmes, Jr.

KB Stallworth

In 1985 the first official Board of Directors Meeting was held.

The Triskaideka 13

State Representative Alma G. Stallworth

Don Davis

Senator David S. Holmes, Jr.

Attorney Richard White

Jack Martin, CPS

Dr. Karl Gregory

Dr. Charles Tucker

Robert Hurst

Senator Jackie Vaughn, III

State Representative Raymond Hood

Attorney Marlyn E. Atkins

Attorney Steve Zimmerman

KB Stallworth

The impact of the Black Caucus Foundation was immediate and powerful. All retail sales from the Michigan Lottery were deposited in First Independence National Bank (Michigan's only Black-owned bank) and held for 90 days of interest earnings before being transferred to the Michigan Department of Treasury minus commission transferred to the Bank of Boston, the bank of GTECH Corporation the states' lottery vendor.

Michigan State University, Wayne State University and the University of Michigan agreed to offer a Political Science Independent Study opportunity to Black students interested in researching and writing "a solution-based" policy paper in collaboration with a member to the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus. This program opened the door to public and private careers in Governmental Affairs in Michigan .



State Representative Micheal Murphy



Lousie Guyton and Duron Marshall



State Representative Mary Lou Parks, Senator Henry Stallings and State Representative Keith B. Stallworth



State Representative Thomas F. Stallworth, III, Representative Alma G. Stallworth & Attorney Reginald Turner

Today, as it did in 1985; the Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan is a confidential analytical resource to policy makers, convenor of intellectual discussions of the pressing challenges and visionary opportunities for African Americans, and an innovator of direct service programs that improve African American life quality.

In keeping with the Founder, Representative Alma G. Stallworth's vision "The Foundation" is the largest school-based provider of evidence-based life skill programs in Michigan. Reaching an average of 5,000 students annually with alcohol, tobacco, drug and violence resistance skills, "The Foundation's" "Navigation to Success" program is providing Black children and others with powerful self-images, strong interpersonal skills, paths to college and gainful employment. In keeping with Senator Holmes' desire to influence processes from "the inside", "The Foundation" has developed a reputation as an important "talent resource" for public and private appointments of African Americans to positions of significant responsibility. Following the vision of banking financier Don Davis, in 2026 "The Foundation's" Project 99 provided the City of Detroit with more than \$100 million in legal judgments from "inner city family wealth thieves" after successfully litigating 4,000 cases through a law firm specifically created to operate its project, designed to pinpoint "non-occupant investors in property tax foreclosed city properties after their purchase from auction and NEVER paid post auction taxes. Lastly, consistent with the vision of "institution building, "The Foundation" gained the support of the U.S. Department of Labor and Community Stakeholders to "re-envision" the delivery of Career Technical Education in inner city schools, align it with the creation of the largest youth Engineering, Design & Construction Expo in Michigan and facilitate job access and growth through the creation, advocacy for and use of "Best Value Procurement Policy" on federal highway, public infrastructure and private contracting opportunities and labor agreements.

Annually "The Foundation" convenes the National Conference of African American Thought Leaders in Washington, DC to honor heroes, hold policy discussions with federal agencies and the Office of the President; as well as plan and move toward a "Transatlantic Brain Gain" that fuses African American professional skill sets and capital with the development of African infrastructure and publicly traded companies.

The Black Caucus Foundation of Michigan is a 501 C(3) tax exempt organization whose administration and operations are managed by Professor T. Stallworth, the organization's CEO.



Professor Nicole T. Stallworth,
Governor Jennifer Granholm
and KB Stallworth



State Representative George
Cushingberry and Senators
Coleman Young, II & Bert Johnson



Senators Samuel "Buzz" Thomas
and Virgil Smith



Senator Jackie Vaughn, III,
Representative Alma G. Stallworth,
Roy Ritchie and Judge Craig Strong



KB Stallworth,
Professor Nicole T. Stallworth
and A. Gregory Eaton