

**Key Dates
 to Remember:**

- BBSA Annual Conference: February 16—19
- BBAA Town Hall February 18
- Consortium OPI June 2—6 (St. Louis, MO)
- NBMBAA Conference: September 26 — October 1 (Atlanta, GA)

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BBAA Blue Note

Volume 3, Issue 2

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Greetings from BBAA President

On behalf of the Black Business Alumni Association, I would like to welcome you to the 30th Annual Black Business Students Association Conference and Alumni Weekend. This weekend is a special time for both students and alumni as we gather to celebrate a man that has touched the lives of generations: Dr. Alfred L. Edwards. "Dr. E" has meant so much to so many people... including me.

Over the past few months, we have taken a hard look at the Black Alumni Association...from purpose to branding to structure. Kimberlee Burrows has done an excellent job of taking the feedback you provided in the

survey taken in 2004 and distilling this information down into actionable recommendations. Those include:

- **Re-branding** the Black Alumni Association to the **Black Business Alumni Association** (learn more by reading Kim's article)

- **Refocusing** our efforts to support our core strength – linking the African-American alumni of the Ross School of Business to one another, the BBSA, and the Ross School of Business as a whole

Restructuring our organization to focus on our core strength

The survey results sent a



Renee Rhoten

clear message: There should be an RSB alumni association focused on African-Americans (95% agree), however only 18% had time to commit to building the BAA. Thus, there is a strong need to reduce the amount of "hands on" work and focus on efforts that add value for alumni, students and the B-School.

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BBSA Conference to Honor Dr. Alfred L. Edwards: Building a Brand on the Shoulders of a Giant

The Black Business Student Association (BBSA) will host its 30th Annual BBSA Conference & Alumni Weekend. The 2006 BBSA conference marks a great milestone as the organization will officially rename its conference in honor of Dr. Alfred L. Edwards, Professor Emeritus.

Students may wonder, "Who is Dr. Edwards?" While many do not know him by name, all Ross students have benefited from Dr. Edwards' contribution to the business school



Dr. Alfred L. Edwards

community. "Dr. E," as he is affectionately called by former students, faculty and administrators, has been integral in making RSB among the top business schools for recruiting exceptional minority candidates. He was a champion of diversity way before it became a ratings multiplier in the *Wall Street Journal* rankings. Furthermore, Dr. E has been a mentor and inspiration to students, faculty and the administration throughout his 30 plus years at Michigan.

(Continued on page 2)



www.umich.edu/~bbsa

Keynote Speaker

Earl Graves

Leadership Breakfast

Carl Brooks
Lynn Wooten

Panel Discussions

- Personal Brand: Using your Power, Influence & Social Capital
- The Evolution of Marketing: Using Non-Traditional Approaches
- Investing Beyond your Borders
- Wealth Building through Social Entrepreneurship
- Beam Me up Techie: Is Technology Bringing Our Worlds Closer or Creating a Stronger Divide?
- Business Turnaround: The Strategic Action Plan



Conference to Honor Dr. Alfred L. Edwards

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Dr. Edwards' career is underscored by several noteworthy accomplishments. He earned his Masters Degree in Economics at the University of Michigan and received his doctorate degree at the University of Iowa. Dr. Edwards worked at Michigan State from 1954–1962. During that time he also developed and started the University of Nigeria with fellow professors and administrators under a sponsorship from the US Agency for International Development. He was appointed by President John F. Kennedy to the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and was also appointed to the position of Assistant to the Commissioner of the Consumer Products Safety Commission in 1973. Following his career in government, Dr E. accepted a position as professor of Economics and Public Policy at the University of Michigan Business School in 1974.

While distinguished, his resume and academic credentials do not fully capture the spirit he has embodied during his tenure at the Ross School. Professor Edwards has been a supporter and confidant to many MBA and BBA students over the past three decades. "If someone were to ask me what he does at this school, I think the last thing I'd say is that he teaches economics, because he's been such a mentor and a shaper of this great community," says Dean Robert Dolan. "There are a lot of people who can teach economics but there's nobody who

can do what he has done in terms of guiding so many people here at the school."

"Dr. E was the driving force behind Michigan's push towards diversity...he is a shaper of this great community"

Dean Robert Dolan

In addition, Dr. Edwards' efforts toward increasing minority representation within the student body and faculty have helped RSB become one of the leading business programs in the country. "Dr. E was the driving force behind Michigan's push towards diversity," says Dean Dolan, and the catalyst of the school's entrance into the Consortium for Graduate Study in Management (CGSM), an organization dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion in American business. Michigan joined CGSM in 1983 and is currently one of 13 member schools including Dartmouth, NYU, and the University of Virginia. Dr. Edwards encouraged the administration to join the Consortium, initiating the school's commitment to increasing minority presence in business management. The Consortium has over 5400 MBA alumni, 700 of which graduated from Michigan.

Similar to how the business school has re-branded itself after a pres-

tigious alumni and contributor to the program at large, Stephen M. Ross, the BBSA has chosen to reinvigorate its annual conference and organization by naming it after Dr. Alfred L. Edwards. BBSA President, Brock Williams, believes the 30th year positions the organization to gain greater visibility for the conference, "...going forward, I envision the BBSA Conference as a major brand building opportunity for Michigan's BBSA. It will attract more minority applicants to the Ross School and local business professionals to visit campus to celebrate with the BBSA and its alumni." Williams goes on to talk about why Dr. Edwards was chosen as the conference's namesake, "Dr. E was a natural choice given the longevity of the BBSA Conference and the legacy [of] Dr. E...his tenure should be indelibly branded upon the minds of all students who walk through the halls of the Stephen M. Ross School of Business."

Undoubtedly, Dr. Alfred Edwards has been a giant to many who have walked the halls of this school. His mantra, "make sure that the doors that were open for you continue to be open for others to come," embodies the character of the BBSA Conference and RSB efforts to encourage diversity within the Ross community.

Professor Emeritus Alfred L. Edwards will be honored at the 30th Annual BBSA Conference during the Gala dinner on Saturday, February 18th.

Ed Hightower Named BBAA Alumni of the Year

Edward T. Hightower is a man that has touched the lives of many MBA students over the past 12 years.

Because of his tremendous contributions, Ed has been voted the 2006 Alumni of the Year by his peers. In order to receive the nomination, candidates must contribute to the business school both financially and in service. He/She must also actively serve his/her community and excel professionally. Ed hits all areas out of the ball park.

For the past 12 years, Ed has helped shape the faces of students walking the halls by serving on the Admissions Committee. In 2000 and 2001 he sponsored MBA teams to conduct research on the motorbike industry in Ghana as part of the African Business Development Corps program. He

has also given back to the BBSA by serving as a panelist for the 2004 BBSA Annual Conference and speaking to the BBSA as part of the BBAA Speaker Series in 2002. Ed is currently the Alumni Relations Chair for the BBAA.

However, Ed's giving doesn't stop with the business school. He also is very active in his community. He is a member Advisory and Fundraising Committees for the Council on Foreign Rela-



Edward T. Hightower

tions - New York and Washington DC based center for the study and practice of international affairs and US foreign policy. He is also an Assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America where he mentored 4 young men to achieve the Eagle Scout ranking.

Professionally, he has over 15 years of experience in product development, marketing and profit/loss general management from the automotive industry. His passion is creating and launching innovative products that deliver superior profits

and win in the marketplace. With that passion in mind, Ed has launched several business ventures, including The Original Marketing Company, LLC, DuSable Engineering Solutions and KujA Moto, Inc. / KujA Moto Ghana Ltd. He has held several marketing, strategic planning and engineering positions at General Motors. For example, he played a significant role in the planning and development of the CTS and the new generation of Cadillac vehicles that led to the revitalization of this icon brand. Ed is currently a Director in the Performance Improvement practice at AlixPartners LLC.

Ed lives in Detroit with his wife, Tracie, and two children—Nia and Kali.

BAA re-brands to become Black Business Alumni Association

A 2005–06 goal of the Black Alumni Association was to establish a brand for the organization. With that, the Black Alumni Association is proposing a name change to the Black Business Alumni Association (BBAA). Although the name change appears minor, the organization hopes the change will have a lasting impact as it shapes its brand identity.

Kimberlee Burrows, MBA '00, led the task force to establish the brand for the former BAA. After assessing the results from the marketing survey conducted in 2005, Burrows identified several key areas which have shaped the

current focus of the BBAA. The rationale for re-branding was twofold:

1. To create a tighter linkage to BBSA in name and deed to strengthen our ties
2. To clearly establish the organization as an association of the Business School

One of the themes that was evident in the research is that there was a clear emotional bond and affinity to Ross School of Business and the Black Business Students Association (BBSA), developed from active engagement and participation while in business school.

Upon graduation, it is an imperative that active engagement and participation continues, although the focus areas for involvement may be slightly different. Additionally, as alumni, we owe it to ourselves, the current students, and prospective students to ensure that the Business School remains the world class institution that it was when we walked the halls. It is our job as the executive board of the Black Business Alumni Association to make it much easier for alums to become and remain a critical force in the Ross School of Business' success.

Black Business Alumni Association Newsletter

www.umbsbaa.org

Are you interested in leading the BBAA's Media and Communications committee? Duties include: redesigning the website to align with the new BBAA strategy, published in the BBAA Blue Note and a strong desire to help!

Please contact Bill Woodson if you are interested.



Message from the BBAA Chairperson

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With that in mind, we are focusing our efforts on three things:

- Development – Reviving the efforts to fund the Endowed Scholarship and Endowed Chair for Dr. Edwards.

- Connecting & Networking – Increasing the focus on communications via the internet and networking events held in major metropolitan areas.

Recruiting – Assisting the Admissions office at RSB in recruiting students of

color to the business school by hosting Admitted Students receptions in major metropolitan areas

We are proposing a restructuring that enables our organization to focus on these three core initiatives. The new committees are listed below this article.

Additional changes to the by-laws will be presented as well to allow for a working, efficient board. These changes all require your approval and will therefore be presented during the BBAA Town Hall meeting on Saturday,

February 18th from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm EST at the Kensington Court Hotel in Ann Arbor, Michigan. All alumni are encouraged to attend and be a part of shaping the direction of the BBAA. This event is the only event that does not require registration to the conference to attend.

I look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Go Blue!

Renee Rhoten

Chairperson, Black Business Alumni Association
r_rhoten@yahoo.com

BBSA Members Continue to Excel at RSB

Congratulations are in order for many current members of the BBSA. In addition to the rigorous demands of coursework and interviewing, members continue to excel by spreading their talents in other arenas.

Ken Alozie channeled his knowledge of the business school application process to write and publish the book "How I Got Into a

Top-Ten Business School."

Adrian Morgan has successfully entered his new business ideas into multiple entrepreneurial competitions on campus, while managing his duties as leader of Section 3. Adrian's business plan was a winner in the assessment round of this year's "Dare to Dream" program and also made him a semi-finalist in the

Michigan Business Challenge.

Omurhu Onokpise has been deemed by the University as a "Distinguished Leader" due to his leadership in his community.

A salute to all members for continuously setting a positive example and going above and beyond to give back to the business school and the community.

BBAA 2005—2007 Executive Board

Chairperson:	Renee Rhoten, MBA 2000	r_rhoten@yahoo.com
Vice-Chairperson:	Bill Woodson, MBA 1986	bwoodson@forwardmotion.biz
Treasurer:	Duane Hart, MBA 1998	dhart@trex.com
Secretary:	Charizma Williams, BBA 2002	charizma_williams@msn.com
Alumni Affairs:	Ed Hightower, MBA 1995	edhigh@ix.netcom.com
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Budget and Finance:	Duane Hart, MBA 1998	dhart@trex.com
Development:	Chekesha Kidd, MBA 2001	Chekesha.kidd@ubs.com
Media & Communications:	<i>Open...Interested?</i>	<i>Contact Bill Woodson</i>
Recruiting:	Kimberlee Burrows, MBA 2000	kempk@umich.edu