

THE GENERATOR

Newsletter for the Next Generation Network of the Executive Leadership Council and Foundation

Fall 2004



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NextGenNetwork: The Past and the Future...

By Jennifer Miles and Susan Chapman

Looking Back...

In 1999, a small group of ELC past essay winners brought their vision of creating a true African American corporate leadership pipeline organization to fruition. With significant support and leadership from Paula Banks (ELC member) and Camilla McGhee (ELC Programs Director), The NextGen Network Inc. was born. By targeting the past essay winners and shadow mentees, NGN provided a platform for continued mentorship and sponsorship of the next generation of African American Corporate leaders.

Initially, our mission was two-fold – doing something for us and doing something for others. Out of this, we developed the organization's foundation by incorporating in the District of Columbia and beginning to develop programs such as the essay competition for high school students and the NGN Buddy program.

Over the past five years, we have worked to move the organization to a higher level as ELC has continued to move ahead. We focused on professional development and growth of our members. During our initial years, we developed the ELC Speaker Series that gave us the opportunity to begin to build critical networks with ELC members and the ELC organization as a whole.

5th Year Anniversary
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President's Corner

By Andrew Frazier

The Next Generation Network (NGN) is taking things to the next level as we complete our 5th year as an organization. Since inception, we have worked hard to build a strong organization and develop programs for our members. Starting in 2005, NGN will expand its **OUTREACH, CONNECTIVITY, and VISIBILITY** in the community. These efforts will contribute to the Executive Leadership Council (ELC) program goals of strengthening the pipeline for African American leaders in business and the community.

NGN's **OUTREACH** efforts will continue to include the very successful Donna Jamison Lago High School Essay Competition. We are also expanding into mentoring through our Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT) relationship and will seek other alternatives to provide mentoring and exposure for high school and college students. In addition, NGN will seek to support, and encourage others to support, worthwhile organizations in the community.

Our goal is for NGN to become a point of **CONNECTIVITY** or hub for junior and mid-level African American professionals, whether or not they're members. This involves working with other organizations on activities and events. It also means being a repository for leadership and professional development information and opportunities. NGN will seek to connect with other African American professionals and support their efforts. An example of our connectivity efforts is the current sponsorship of the Hudson Highland i2i Networking Series that is attended by hundreds of African American professionals in several locations across the country.

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ELC Member Spotlight On: Michael A. Wright, Sr.

By Laurence Latimer



Michael ‘Mike’ Wright, Sr., learned the value of teamwork and relationships to achieving success early in his life. The Portsmouth, VA native lettered on the North Carolina State University football team while pursuing his Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering. “On the field, you quickly learned that the only way to succeed was to trust your teammates to do their

job. Creating and maintaining that trust starts and ends with your relationship with your teammates.”

After graduating from NC State, Mike went to work as an industrial engineer at then General Foods, which is now part of Kraft Foods, Inc, a member of the Altria Group, Inc., family of companies. Originally working in Dover, Delaware, he quickly ascended the corporate ladder. In less than 5 years, in addition to his line duties, Mike was responsible for coordinating and administering HR activities, including labor relations, training, recruiting and community relations, for 1,200 employees. He also served on the negotiation team for a first-ever seven-year agreement with the union in his plant.

“Demonstrating commitment and excellence in your work is critical to success,” he says in speaking about his achievements. “But you can’t over look the human element. Successfully handling challenging interpersonal situations has been a key component of my success at Altria.”

With just over 20 years within the Altria family of companies, Mike has held various positions within Operations and Human Resources in several locations. Currently, he is Vice President – Human Resources & Technology for Altria Corporate Services, Inc. (ALCS) in New York. In this role, he is primarily responsible for all Human Resources generalists supporting the ALCS functional organizations and Senior Leadership of Altria Group, Inc. Additional responsibilities include Global HR support and security of data in worldwide SAP system.

Mike is also successfully balancing an active family life and community service activities. He is married to the former Pam Dukes and they have one son, Michael Anthony, Jr., also known as MJ. He earned his MBA from Columbia Business School. Mike became a member of ELC in 2003 and has been active in their board leadership development initiatives.

He has received numerous awards and honors, including the Distinguished Service Award from Columbia Business School and the YMCA Black Achiever Award.

Additionally, Mike sits on the Executive Advisory Council for the School of Management at Delaware State University, the Board of Trustees for the Althea Gibson Foundation and is the Immediate Past International Chairman for the Human Resources Committee of his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He holds life memberships in his fraternity, the NAACP, National Urban League, National Black MBA Association, and the National Harley Owners Club.

Mike is also a member of the New Jersey Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, a non-profit comprised of African American men and women dedicated to the sport of motorcycling and to the education of all people as it pertains to the rightful place of African Americans in our country’s history. Members ride under the name of the ‘Buffalo Soldiers’ to express pride in, and respect for, the many accomplishments they made during the decades following the civil war.

“Reaching back is exceptionally important to ensure that we increase our numbers at the most senior levels in business. Ann Fudge was a great resource early in my career and helped me navigate the challenging political waters. Like Ann, through my professional and community involvement, I try to make myself available to younger people who can benefit from my experience and perspective. Again, it is that human component that can be all the difference to success.”

Leaders of Leaders

By Andrew Frazier

NGN is having its first ever leadership retreat on Saturday October 16th following the ELC October meeting activities in Washington, DC. This leadership retreat will be attended by current and incoming officers and committee chairs of the organization, as well as various advisors and supporters. It will be facilitated by David Greene, CEO of the Urbanomics Consulting firm.

The primary purpose of the NGN leadership retreat is to plan for the new year (2005), facilitate a smoother transition of information, and further develop important relationships among the organization’s leadership team. Since NGN is a virtual organization, it is critical to make the most of the two times a year that we get together as a group (Spring and Fall ELC Meetings).

Leaders of Leaders

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NGN Member Spotlight On: Yusef Kassim

By Mario Lewis



It was almost five years ago when I first met Yusef Kassim at an ELC Conference. He had recently started at Goldman Sachs and displayed the drive, passion and energy of a person ready to take on, and beat, Wall Street and the business world. He shared his story of growing up on the tough streets of inner

city D.C., the challenges he overcame and the lessons he learned. Five years later, Yusef is still focused on success in business while also empowering and giving back to his community. His goals have become larger and more far-reaching and he is working even harder.

Yusef describes himself as ambitious, hard working and entrepreneurial. He has been marching up the corporate ladder, recently becoming a Vice President and Co-manager of the Technology, Media & Telecom research practice at the Gerson Lehrman Group (GLG), a leading independent primary research firm. Over the past three years, he has helped build GLG's global research coverage and played an instrumental role in growing GLG's client base to include over 400 of the leading buy side investment institutions. As one of the youngest VP's in the firm, he currently co-manages a team of 25 employees and services over 200 clients.

His immediate career goal is to be promoted to Managing Director within the next two years. Yusef concedes, "This is an aggressive goal, but I am committed to the firm's growth and my personal growth, which is key to making this happen." He joined the firm as the 20th employee. Since then, GLG has grown to over 150 employees, seven offices globally with revenue of over \$100 million projected in 2004. When discussing his long-term career goals, Yusef plans to continue helping GLG grow to become the #1 provider of independent primary research, as well as start his own company or possibly a money management firm.

Being an NGN member and having access to ELC members has provided him with inspiration and guidance as he moved forward in his career. "Seeing successful people who look like me that have done exceptionally well in their careers keeps me focused on setting the bar higher." This is a big difference from growing up in the inner city of Washington DC where there were very few examples of African Americans succeeding and living well. "It motivates me to know that, along with me, my NGN peers are out there working hard every day at their careers."

Just as in his professional life, Yusef pushes himself in his personal life to be the absolute best in helping others. "My friends would describe me as consistent, community-focused and always willing

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Community Outreach Reaching Back to Pull Forward

By Joy Booker, Laurence Latimer & Rochelle Beard

The Next Generation Network is serious about community service. The development of our annual scholarship competition, outreach to local schools and new partnerships creates opportunities to reach back and pull forward. Like ELC, it is our goal to strengthen the pipeline of African American professionals and cultivate young talent and ambition.

The *Path to Excellence Scholarship* program was launched in 1999. In memory of a Next Generation Network founder who succumbed to cancer in 2003, the program was renamed the *Donna Jamison Lago Scholarship*. Since it's inception, over 1,000 students have applied to the program and over \$30,000 in college scholarships have been awarded. High school seniors are invited to submit applications that include biographical information and an essay. The 2004 essay question was: "As the newly elected President of the United States, what three initiatives would you want to introduce?"

The 2004 Donna Jamison Lago Scholarship was co-chaired by NGN members Joy Booker and Lydia Cutrer. The members of the 2004 NGN DJL Essay Review Committee included Jeannette Bartley, Rochelle Beard, Joy Booker, Lydia Cutrer, Djena Graves, Laurence Latimer, Llewellyn McPherson and Anthony Moore.

This year, seventy-three applications were submitted by the March 14 deadline. The 2004 winners are:

First Place \$1,500:

- Jeff Y. Shao University of Texas at Dallas
- Melissa J. Cole New York University
- Myrisha S. Lewis Harvard University

Second Place \$1,000:

- Harry K. Robinson University of Akron
- Mia H. Bolling Duke University
- Brenda Montes Wellesley College

Honorable Mention (\$50 Barnes and Nobles gift certificate):

- Keakealani Pestana Boise State University
- Nadia Ragsdale Bethune-Cookman College
- Nikita Bhakta University of Florida

The winning essays this year were full of insight. The top essays included many of the hot button issues in this year's presidential race including tax reform, foreign spending, social security privatization, health care and education.

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What's Good?

Joy Booker began New York Life's Management Development program, a recently introduced leadership development program targeting high potential mid-level managers.

In her new role as Vice President in Mutual Fund Retail Product Development in New York Life's Investment Management subsidiary, Joy is responsible for monitoring fund performance to determine strategies related to value positioning and strengthening the NYLIM family of mutual funds.

Steve Brown, an equity sales trader with Wachovia Securities and a Duke/Fuqua graduate, just celebrated one year with Wachovia back in July.

Kevin Chan-A-Shing graduated from Wharton MBA school with a double concentration in Finance and Marketing with Honors on May 2004. Kevin will be working for the Boston Consulting Group in Chicago, IL.

Nathaniel Choge passed the June CFA I Exam and was recently started a new position with Time Inc, as an Associate Research Manager in their Marketing Research and Analysis Group.

Lydia Cutrer commenced her graduate business studies at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. She expects her MBA in 2006.

Andrew Frazier successfully managed the transition of over 1,000 New York Life employees from the home office in New York City to the company's new campus located in Westchester, NY. In his new role, Andrew is in charge of Corporate Services for the entire facility. He has responsibility for ten service operations and over 60 people.

Yusef Kassim was promoted to Vice President and Co-Group Leader for the Technology, Media, and Telecommunications research practice at Gerson Lehrman Group.

Let's all congratulate our fellow NGNers on their accomplishments and good fortune!

5th Year Anniversary

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As time has progressed, we have developed our (It's for You) Sessions, the ELC/NGN Mentoring Program and in the last few years have incorporated an executive coach and financial planning advice into our program. Additionally, we have expanded our membership through the addition of the Professional Class Membership process and the inclusion of the Al Martins Scholars.

From a community outreach perspective, we have awarded over \$30,000 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors. In addition, we have brought high school students into our corporations to shadow us for the day. We have built a relationship with the Granville Academy of Washington, D.C., providing an annual opportunity for high school students to network with NGN members. Finally, we recently developed a relationship with Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT), which will provide an outlet to mentor HS and college students just starting their careers.

Our members have been recognized in national publications and have been called on by ELC to participate and lead their marquee activities such as the Business Case Competition Judging, the Midlevel Manager's Symposiums and most recently, in the connection with the I2I organization events.

As our relationship with ELC has grown, so too has the realization that we are all poised to do great things both individually and collectively. The passing of one our founding members, Donna Jamison Lago (DJL), has given each of us a challenge to live life to the fullest and make a difference along the way.

The Future

As past presidents of NGN, it has been a great joy to help start this organization and lead it to the next level. As we have reflected on the past five years, we have compiled our list of keys to success for the future. The keys are:

5th Year Anniversary

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1. Continue to develop and build strong relationships with ELC.

As we reflect, one of the significant benefits of being a part of this organization is the mentoring that we receive from various ELC members. Many of us can now call some ELC members “family” and know that these bonds will follow us for the rest of our lives regardless of what path we take. Treasure this and use it appropriately.

2. Continue to build relationships with each other.

Often times we hear several ELC members say “We wish we had an organization like NGN when we were coming up.” We can’t say enough about how important it has been to have strong relationships with people who understand the pain we are experiencing. Our ability to help each other grow and develop will only pay large dividends to the future success of this organization and ourselves.

3. Remember - one of the main tenants of this organization is to develop the next set of leaders.

Our membership is an awesomely talented group of individuals. Many are well on the road to becoming ELC members. Being prepared for the opportunity and supporting each other is going to be crucial to all of our successes. Only then will we truly be able to say that we will not be alone when we arrive at the top.

Finally, in closing, we challenge each of you to recognize that NGN is a “gift that needs to give to more than just us”. Our ability to give back, forward, sideways and every which way will help solidify our legacy and achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. To steal a recent line from Oprah, “We were smoking before, now we are about to be on fire!”

We look forward to continuing to blaze the trail with each and every one of you.

NGN will increase its **VISIBILITY** in 2005 as we build on the strong foundation established over the last years. We will build our brand as the premiere, world class organization for African American leaders in business and the community. Our newly revamped website, “The Generator” newsletter, and articles in the “ELC Contact” magazine will serve as vehicles for getting our story out and helping others to recognize us as leaders among leaders.

2005 promises to be an exciting year for NGN, as we focus on **OUTREACH, CONNECTIVITY, and VISIBILITY** in the community.

We encourage everyone to take an active role in supporting these efforts through leadership, participation, and/or financial support. As you know, there is no limit to what we can do together. Wishing everyone a happy, healthy, and prosperous remainder of 2004.

In 2002, NGN extended an invitation to the youth of Granville Academy of Northern Virginia to attend sessions of the fall business meeting. The academy prepares youth for economic empowerment by teaching the foundations of business, finance, technology, entrepreneurship, character building, and community service. Bill Granville, formerly a member of the Executive Leadership Council and senior level executive with ExxonMobil, founded the academy in 1983. Several cities including Baltimore, MD, Cleveland, OH, Plainfield, NJ, Waterbury, CT, North Carolina, and Virginia independently operate affiliate programs with support from the national office in Trenton, NJ.

Recently, NGN initiated a partnership with Management Leadership for Tomorrow (MLT). Through the relationship with MLT, NGNers are strongly encouraged to become members of MLT’s Volunteer Network. Volunteers register and provide basic biographical information. Throughout the year, volunteers are offered opportunities to mentor MLT college participants who are starting their careers and have similar interests.

Research conducted for MLT by the Boston Consulting Group indicates that despite representing nearly 26% of the US population, minorities occupy only 5-8% of the fast-track entry-level business-related jobs. Moreover, minorities hold only 3% of senior management positions.

“There is tremendous opportunity for collaboration between NGN and MLT,” says Laurence Latimer, NGNer and Director of the Career Planning and Job Placement program at MLT. “Although the organizations focus on different areas, our missions are largely the same – to increase the presence of talented minorities in senior executive positions in business.”

Through such programs that touch high school through college students, we offer our members focused opportunities to grow and to help others, allowing them to leverage their own experiences to inspire others to achieve professional success.

Fall Meeting Preview

By Djena N. Graves

For the experienced NGNer, the seemingly endless streams of e-mails, conference calls and conversations about the upcoming NGN Fall Meeting serve as a valued source of up-to-date information about one of the undisputed highlights of the year. Conversely, for the inexperienced NGNer, the same deluge of information can easily be a source of confusion and questions about this curious event that the NGN membership is rallying around. For those of you who have not previously attended the Fall Meeting, let this be your guide to getting the most out of this rare opportunity.

The NGN Fall Meeting, scheduled for October 13-16th in Washington D.C., provides NGN members with an opportunity to receive leadership and career development training, to network with established business leaders, and to conduct strategic planning sessions that strengthen the vitality of our programs. It is one of two times a year that NGN, a virtual organization, gathers “en masse” to build relationships with old and new friends, pursue our agenda to foster the development of young talent, and invigorate the organization for the following year. Coordinated with the ELC Fall Meeting, the Meeting includes NGN business discussions, developmental workshops and fun social activities.

On Wednesday, Oct 13th, most NGNers will arrive into Washington D.C. and will come together for a cocktail hour to kick-off the Fall Meeting. Both new and existing members will meet and greet one another and share laughs, smiles and good times over drinks. The reception is informal and serves as a first welcome to new members.

Thursday, Oct 14th will be a full day with business meetings, guest speakers and culminates in an extravagant gala. The day will begin with introductions of the NGN officers, committee chairs, members and invited guests. In addition to committee updates, officer elections, committee chair appointments and speakers from the ELC, the NGN Fall Meeting will also set the course for activities and programs that are planned for the following year.

The meeting will break at approximately 5:30PM, giving NGN members time to change into our most elegant evening wear and join the ELC for the 16th Annual ELC Dinner and Post-Dinner Receptions. The black-tie dinner, which will highlight and honor ELC members who have made a

difference as well as ELC scholarship winners, is the social highlight of the fall meeting. The sold-out event is attended by the most influential corporate, political and community leaders and is followed by receptions that go well into the night.

On Friday, October 15th the 10th Annual Mid-Level Manager’s Symposium will examine leadership issues among the generations that have inherited the fruits of Brown vs. Board of Education. Fruits that include the rise of the black middle class, expanded educational opportunities, global entrepreneurship, and the acquisition of power in arenas ranging from world politics to global business. This year’s theme is “Mastering the Intangibles of Leadership”. The Symposium is for African American mid-level corporate managers with five or more years of corporate management experience and is a great opportunity to network with business leaders around the nation. Bring plenty of business cards!

Finally, on Saturday, October 16th, the NGN officers and committee chairs will come together, along with Urbanomics, the organization’s staff and backbone, for the first annual Leadership Retreat, where they will discuss how to make NGN a better and more effective organization for its membership. Following the leadership retreat, the activities of the fall meeting will conclude with a BBQ filled with food, fun and fellowship.

Now that you know what to expect, make the most of the unique opportunity presented by this exciting event! See you in our nation’s capitol!

2004 Fall Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, October 13th

- 6:30 PM - 9:30 PM NGN & Friends
Networking Cocktail Hour

Thursday, October 14th

- 7:30 AM – 3:30 PM NGN Business Meeting
- 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM Pre-Dinner Receptions
- 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM 16th Annual ELC Dinner
and Post-Dinner
Receptions

Friday, October 15th

- 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM 10th Annual Mid Level
Managers Symposium
“Mastering the Intangibles
of Leadership”

Saturday, October 16th

- 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM NGN Leadership Retreat
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM NGN BBQ

NGN NY Meeting PHOTOS



NGN's Jessica Carter, Damian Bridges and Patricia Dorsey enjoying the reception.



On Wednesday, August 18th, New York members and guests of NGN gathered for a special reception that was sponsored by Merrill Lynch. It was a great opportunity to reconnect with fellow NGNers and interact with seasoned executives from Merrill Lynch.



David Gill and Sulaiman Avery reconnect at the reception.



Guest Eyrique Miller and NGNers Andrew Frazier and Bill Jordan having a great evening.



Merrill Lynch's Westina Matthews Shatten, First Vice President for Community Leadership Planning and Strategy, along with Damian Bridges.



Daniel Cochran, Senior Vice President for the Global Private Client Group at Merrill Lynch was the keynote speaker for the reception. Daniel Cochran and Keith Webb, from Diversity Recruiting at Merrill Lynch along with NGN's Laurence Latimer.

NGN Website

Check it out! We want to hear from you!
www.nextgennetwork.com

The NGN website has been revamped with updated content, pictures, and information. **We need your help!** – please provide any feedback, comments, or ideas that you may have to make it better. This website is our face to the world. We need to ensure that it represents the premiere, world class organization for African American business and community leaders appropriately.

NGN Advisory Board

By Sekou Kaalund

NGN is working with ELC to establish an Advisory Board to provide counsel and guidance to NGN officers on strategic issues while working to support and further the mission of NGN. The Board members will demonstrate their support by facilitating the exchange of ideas between ELC and NGN members and enhancing our ability to serve members and set and accomplish goals. Advisory Board members will serve as ambassadors/champions for NGN by:

- Providing input, perspective and guidance in the development of NGN's long term strategies;
- Influencing and supporting fundraising and budget allocation efforts on behalf of NGN
- Keeping other ELC members and corporate executives informed about the activities and accomplishments of our NGN Members.

The Board will consist of five to seven members jointly identified by NGN and ELC leadership, will serve in a voluntary, advisory capacity and shall be coordinated by the ELC President. The President of ELC will ultimately select Advisory Board members to serve one-year, renewable terms. After the Board has been successfully established, a rotation sequence will be created to stagger the terms of members so that no more than approximately a third of the terms expire in any given year. Members can be reappointed for additional terms by the ELC President, but may not exceed three consecutive terms. Regular meetings of the Advisory Board shall be held at scheduled ELC Winter and Spring meetings. During the meetings, NGN officers will meet with Advisory Board members to discuss current organizational activities and strategies. On occasion, Advisory Board members may be encouraged (but not required) to participate in NGN member or board conference calls.

To date, we have had tremendous interest from ELC members, and we are working on finalizing the Advisory membership. We are excited about this new addition to NGN and look forward to valuable exchanges with the Advisory Board.

ELC Spotlight

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to give honest advice.” Yusef has been a strong advocate of youth mentoring programs, and currently serves as a mentor for Student Sponsor Partnership and iMentor, two New York City based non-profit organizations. Since 1999, he has been the key sponsor of an annual scholarship awarded to a graduating senior of his alma mater, Benjamin Banneker High School in Washington, D.C. “With all the focus on my career and community service, I don’t pay enough attention to having fun.” He is happy when he has the chance to spend time with friends and family.

Yusef’s main personal goal is to write a book, focused on documenting the story of growing up in inner city DC and the challenges, difficulties and issues facing the black community. He hopes the book will serve to inspire young persons to look beyond their surroundings, developing uplifting goals and focus on achieving them. “I believe that people who have overcome obstacles and made achievements in their lives need to tell their story, in order to help the young people coming behind them.”

In closing, Yusef has a lot on his plate as he seeks to become a successful businessman, community servant and philanthropist. However, he is just getting started in his career and he is prepared for big things in the future.

Leaders of Leaders

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The impact of the NGN leadership retreat will be significant. It will enable the organization to jump-start its efforts in 2005 as a result of more effective planning, organization, and communication for the leadership team. It will also position us better to achieve our goal of having every member taking on a leadership role within the organization. In addition, it will help to increase our **OUTREACH, CONNECTIVITY, and VISIBILITY** initiatives in the community. There is no limit to what we can accomplish together and the leadership retreat will put us on track to do even greater things in 2005.

NGN Officers:

**President Andrew Frazier,
Vice President Sekou Kaalund, Treasurer Jeannette Bartley,
and Secretary Rochelle Beard**

NGN Committee Chairs:

**Sulaiman Avery, Joy Booker, Jessica Carter, Frank Clark, Lydia Cutrer,
Djena Graves, Jennifer Kaalund, Laurence Latimer, and Jennifer Miles**

Newsletter Committee:

Djena Graves, Laurence Latimer, Rochelle Beard, and Mario Lewis