

# The Generator

Newsletter for the NextGen Network, Inc. – Preparing the next generation of African American Leaders

FALL 2006

## Leadership Perspectives: Charting Our Own Path – The Year in Review

By Vice President Joy Booker



After a strong 2006 kickoff, the NextGen Network Leadership Team has continued to further enhance the value proposition to the organization's members. At a two-part leadership retreat held in February and April, the NextGen Network Leadership Team identified four focus areas: Membership, Organizational Awareness, Controls and Processes, Meeting Programming.

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### Membership

NextGen Network, Inc. is in the process of restructuring the annual application and member on-boarding processes, administering member surveys, and developing the 2006 Member Profile book. Additionally NextGen Network, Inc. launched Phase I of the mentorship program which includes Peer-to-Peer mentoring. Phase II, which will include members of The Executive Leadership Council, will follow.

### Organizational Awareness

Events underwritten by corporate sponsors and members' companies continue to build NextGen Network, Inc. awareness.

- April - AXA-Equitable Financial hosted a Networking Social in New York, NY.
- June - Prudential Financial Vice-Chairman, John Strangfeld, lead sponsor for 2006, hosted Financial Planning Seminar and Networking Reception in Newark, NJ.

- September - Food Lion Corporation partnered with the organization to host a Southeast Regional networking event aboard a yacht cruising Lake Norman in Charlotte, NC.

### Controls and Processes

Stemming from the 2006 Leadership Retreats, committee chairs are establishing increased transparency around NextGen Network, Inc. controls and processes. The organization has revised policies for vendor service invoices and annual budgetary planning, and is developing the first annual financial report. Additionally, the Governance Committee is working on the process to elect 2007 officers. The organization also continues to develop new partnerships with key corporate sponsors.

### Meeting Programming

NextGen Network, Inc. continues to enrich the content for Membership Meetings. During the Spring meeting, the organization partnered to host a Wealth Building Seminar facilitated by Matthew Scott, Black Enterprise Financial Editor. In addition, a business case on private equity and venture capital was facilitated by Professor Paul Harper, Darden Graduate School of Business.

NextGen Network, Inc. is poised for success and growth and continues in its pursuit to become the premier organization for high-potential African-American mid-level managers. Continue to look out for members on the move this year – in corporate America, in the community and in the executive focus. ■

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## In This Issue

NextGen Network Inc. was founded in 1999 as a youth affiliate of The Executive Leadership Council™, the nation's premier leadership network of the most senior African American corporate executives in Fortune 500 companies. NextGen Network, Inc. is a world class professional organization that offers career and professional development, community service opportunities, and points of connectivity for African-American business professionals.

NextGen Network, Inc.'s mission is to create a professional network and development opportunity for African American professionals, to serve as an extension of The Executive Leadership Council and its charitable affiliate The Executive Leadership Foundation, to provide career and professional development for future business leaders, and to offer community outreach programming and support.

# Profile of a Champion: Paula A. Banks

By Susan E. Chapman

When you think of the word champion, many think of someone who has won a competition. However, the first definition in the dictionary of champion is not one who has won a competition, rather it is one who fights for another or a cause. Indeed, that definition exemplifies Paula A. Banks. Not only was she a champion in the founding of NextGen Network, Inc. but Ms. Banks has worked tirelessly for many social and youth causes including the plight of young people, higher education and women as exemplified through her work with organizations like The National Council of Negro Women, Women Work, Count on Me and Girls Inc.



As a member of The Executive Leadership Council, Ms. Banks worked within the organization and the BP/Amoco Foundation, where she was a Senior Vice President, to make NextGen Network, Inc. a reality. When asked why starting the organization was so important to her, she said "You can plant a tree and have solid roots but unless you care about the branches and you care about how the tree grows, then you are only doing half of what we as accomplished African Americans have a responsibility and desire to do. It was an effort to create a process for young people to support each other and provide the necessary resources for them to access to what they need to develop in corporate America." It was through Ms. Banks' tireless commitment to and vision for the NextGen Network, Inc. that BP provided the initial \$150,000 in grant money to get the organization running. Ms. Banks was also motivated by her belief that that the organization should focus on defining a vision for itself and growth rather than on fundraising.

Today, NextGen Network, Inc. has more than 50 members actively gives back to the community and provides development for African American talented professionals to flourish. Ms. Bank's influence in the organization is still today as she mentors members,

actively provides advice to the leadership and continues to spread the word about the importance of the organization. In fact, she says, "The reasons for starting NextGen Network, Inc. still stand but I get an added benefit [working with young people] keeps me learning, challenged and on my toes."

Ms. Banks says she draws a lot from the touch points of young people who are growing in their lives and careers and that she can learn from their experiences. Providing young people with opportunities and breaking down barriers on their behalf has been a lifelong commitment for Paula Banks, who started her professional career as a school teacher and actively pioneered the concept of an open learning environment. Working within a strict Catholic teaching environment, Ms. Banks encouraged her students to work and think outside of societal norms. As a testament to her influence, she is still in touch with several of her students who are even today thriving in their careers.

After her years as a teacher, Ms. Banks' career continued to develop; she spent 24 years working her way from retail manager at Sears Roebuck and Company to Director of Public Relations and President of the Sears Roebuck Foundation. After a full

career with Sears and life in Chicago, Ms. Banks made the difficult decision to leave home to continue her career growth in London where she relocated to become Senior Vice President of Global Social Investments and President of the BP/Amoco Foundation. When asked about that decision, she says "I had no idea of what my capacity was until I left home. I said to myself, how could I not go?" In retrospect, Ms. Banks admits that along the way there were bumps, bruises and lessons learned.

"I could have done a better job of nurturing and maintaining my professional relationships," she muses but says the experience taught her a great deal about learning how to ask for and accept help as well as learn that she could succeed in any circumstance.

Throughout her career, Ms. Banks has influenced corporate social investment/giving of over \$500 million dollars. Many organizations continue to enjoy the benefit of her vision. These days, Ms. Banks has shifted professional career gears and is spending her time as President and CEO of P. A. Banks Enterprises, a business consulting firm focusing on social strategy and policy, diversity and inclusion marketing and marketing communications planning and execution. Her days are now spent flying across the country to share her wisdom and experience with clients. On moving outside of corporate America, Ms. Banks says, "It feels a little scary but fabulous. For the first time in my life, I have the opportunity to determine what I want and to do the best I can! I love it." Ms. Banks doesn't know what the future holds but she welcomes whatever may come. And in spite of her busy schedule, Ms. Banks still makes coaching, mentoring and working with young people a priority. She feels that while her protégées get a lot from her and she gets a great deal from them. Ms. Banks says, "young

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people bring more honesty and integrity than often times my peers may not. The fact that young people growing in their career are willing to question their career moves and ask for help, helps me complete my circle". Ms. Banks says to NextGen Network, Inc. members "I have a vision of a ladder and since NextGen

Network, Inc. members are halfway up the ladder, don't forget to turn around and ensure that you bring someone up the ladder with you."

Like a true champion, Ms. Banks has always been willing to share her secrets of success, her top three are:

- Find the place where your passion and your abilities intersect and go for it.
- Have Fun.

- Stealing a line from Council member Ingrid Saunders Jones "Don't let your house get too big for you".

All NextGen Network, Inc. members have had the benefit of Paula Bank's willingness to ensure the ladder was available for them to climb; they have a responsibility to do the same for others. ■

## NextGen Network, Inc. Pipeline: Donna Jamison Lago Memorial Scholarship

*By Reggie Harwell*

In keeping with The NextGen Network, Inc.'s mission of community outreach programming to enhance the lives of African American youth, the organization is proud to announce the winners of the Donna Jamison Lago Memorial Scholarship 2006 Essay Competition. The competition, now in its 7th year, provides African-American high school seniors with the opportunity to earn scholarship dollars while addressing important issues affecting minority communities.

The top three finalists receive a cash prize of \$2500 to use towards their college expenses, three semifinalists receive \$1500, and three honorable mentions receive \$500 each. The 2006 Scholarship winners are:

### FINALISTS

Tolulope Bukola, Oviedo, FL  
Jessica Robertson Flossmoor, IL  
Alexia McCurin Fort Washington, MD

### SEMI-FINALISTS

Jacoyia Kindred, Lithonia, GA  
Nashawn Anderson, Paterson, NJ  
Janice Footman, Baltimore, MD

### HONORABLE MENTIONS

Benjamin James, Monticello, MN  
Jasmine Gray, Germantown, TN  
Kenton Davis, Cincinnati, OH

Entergy Nuclear Northeast, a division of the Entergy Corporation- one of the nation's largest global energy companies, was lead sponsor for the essay competition. Based in White Plains, NY, Entergy Nuclear Northeast delivers electricity to more than three million homes in the New York

City and Westchester County areas, and supplies power to support New York City's transportation system. NextGen Network, Inc. and Entergy teamed up to provide minority scholarship opportunities and to give aspiring African American youth a voice in environmental concerns. Ken Theobalds, Director of Government Affairs for Entergy Nuclear Northeast says, "Entergy Nuclear Northeast and NextGen Network, Inc. have the same vision and goal and that is to ensure we educate and empower African-American young people through scholarship and opportunity." "This is a great partnership for us because we can provide sponsorship opportunities for our youth and educate them on the energy issues that are affecting our nation."

The Donna Jamison Lago Memorial Scholarship Essay Competition is named after a founding member of NextGen Network, Inc. who lost her battle to cancer in 2003. The scholarship was created to educate and encourage high school seniors to think critically about important issues that affect their lives. ■

# Member Spotlight

## Djena Graves

Director of Business Development for ICV Capital Partners LLC

By Jennifer Kaalund



Whoever said that 'the sky is the limit,' didn't know Djena Graves. Ms. Graves, who piloted a plane for the first time this summer, has had a career trajectory that has taken her to new heights. Currently as Director of Business Development for ICV Capital Partners LLC "ICV" (a New-York based private investment fund), Ms. Graves is responsible for generating investment opportunities by cultivating key relationships with entrepreneurs, intermediaries, and related professionals. Additionally, she focuses on seeking revenue enhancement opportunities for ICV's existing portfolio and performs fundraising and investor relations activities. For some, these tasks could be daunting, but for Ms. Graves, who hardly contained her excitement as

she discussed her role and the firm, it is career nirvana. "I love what I do," she said, extolling the benefits of small business. She encourages NextGen Network, Inc. members to also cast a wide net when considering career opportunities and to resist misconceptions about small businesses and potentially miss a great career opportunity. She feels that small businesses can offer the nurturing environment that is sometimes absent in larger firms. In fact when Ms. Graves compared her experience at ICV to larger firms, she pointed out that there is a significant difference in professional development opportunities and said smaller firms are completely vested in the employee's growth and development. This she feels, is due to the fact that the company's success is more directly linked to the employee's ability to be successful.

Ms. Graves' commitment is certainly not limited to the work environment. She is also very passionate about her work in the community. She currently serves on the boards of Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), Harlem Success Academy Charter School and the Striver's Gardens Homeowners Association. Ms. Graves has been a member of NextGen Network, Inc. for three years, serving on the community service committee and as the communications committee chairperson. She feels that the most beneficial aspect of NextGen Network, Inc. membership has been the strong relationships she has developed with other members.

Always striving for the delicate balance between work and home life, Ms. Graves enjoys traveling, and recently visited Croatia and Dubai. The obvious question is where will Djena Graves go next? Whether it's continued success in her current role or becoming the next entrepreneur across the table, Ms. Graves will definitely fly high. ■

## Rochelle Beard

Sales & Marketing Manager for Corporate Brands, Giant Food Stores/Ahold

By Bradlee Benn



Even at a young age, Rochelle Beard had a keen interest in business. While some kids played "Cops & Robbers" Ms. Beard and her friends played "Secretary & Boss." Her first experience in the "real world" of business was as an intern at ProServ—at the time the most elite sports management firm in the world representing all-star athletes such as Michael Jordan and Patrick Ewing—while attending Howard University's School of Business. This internship fueled Ms. Beard's interest in sports management and upon graduation she took a job with the National Basketball Association's Washington Bullets (now the Wizards). After a couple of years working in Sales, she moved back to her hometown of

Cleveland, Ohio to join the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers. Working her way through the ranks, Ms. Beard eventually became the Community Relations Manager. She left the organization to enroll full time at Case Western Reserve University and pursue her Master's degree in Business Administration.

While in graduate school, Ms. Beard found a new passion in the retail industry. After graduation she joined Ahold, one of the world's largest International Supermarket & Food/Beverage Retailers and owner of Giant Food Stores, Stop & Shop and Peapod. As the current Sales & Marketing Manager for Corporate Brands, Ms. Beard's primary goal is to increase the purchases of private label brands. Some of the key challenges that Ms. Beard faces are

battling for limited shelf space with competing brands, insuring marketing and promotional activities enhance sales performance, and insuring execution of strategy throughout all levels of the company. Never one to back down from a challenge she says, the evolving business environment and challenging nature of her job are the primary reasons she loves what she does.

Despite a hectic work load, Ms. Beard finds time to participate in organizations dear to her heart. One such organization is NextGen Network, Inc. which she joined in 2001 while in grad school and a winner of The Executive Leadership Council's national essay competition. During her tenure with NextGen Network, Inc. she has held various positions including participation on the Community Outreach and Membership Committees. Additionally, Ms. Beard served on the NextGen Network, Inc. leadership team as Executive Secretary, oversaw the development of the

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first NextGen Network, Inc. newsletter, helped revamp the website and expand the organization's ongoing partnership with the Granville Academy.

Ms. Beard believes that NextGen Network, Inc. has done wonders for her both

professionally and personally. She says she has gained a greater sense of motivation as a result of learning from her colleagues' experiences, and meeting and networking with individuals she might never have met otherwise. Ms. Beard gives the following advice to all new

members. "Take advantage of this tremendous opportunity, but at the same time make sure you contribute to the organization just as much as you take out of it." Based on Ms. Beard's track record of service and accomplishments it's clear that she heeds her own advice. ■

## Young Professional's Toolbox: The Do's and Don'ts of Working With Executive Recruiters

*By Alex Dixon*

Are you a highly motivated mid-level professional with transferable skills? After consulting with your mentor, have you decided that it is time to find a new role outside of your current company? If you answer yes to both of these questions then developing a relationship with an executive recruiter may be appropriate for you. Although, it is never too early to begin developing relationships with headhunters, experienced professionals should first remain focused on performing at their highest level within their current role and secondly, seriously consider all internal opportunities before deciding to "jump-ship". Once the decision has been made, you can either entertain inbound calls from headhunters or proactively seek out their services. However be mindful of several Do's and Don'ts of working with executive recruiters. With the assistance of Yindra T. Cotman, Consulting Practice Director with Ajilon Solutions please find below some helpful tips.

### *Do:*

- I. Develop a clear understanding of the types of positions in which you are interested. You will constantly be presented with interesting opportunities and without a clear purpose, time will be wasted.
- II. Thoroughly interview your recruiter before asking them to represent you before prospective employers. Be absolutely comfortable with the character and judgment of your headhunter.
- III. Investigate and understand the relationship of the recruiter and the client. How is the recruiter compensated? How long have they been working with the client?
- IV. Communicate everything you want and need explicitly to your recruiter. (i.e compensation, benefits, etc.)

- V. Conduct your own market, industry, and job research about the prospective employers.
- VI. Mine your recruiter for information; most large agencies have databases of opportunities across disciplines and geographies.
- VII. Ask questions!!!! Why is the new position coming available? Why is the company looking for external candidates? Who will I be working with/for?
- VIII. Be discrete. The last thing you want to do is jeopardize your current role by being sloppy about your external job search.

### *Don't:*

- I. Assume that recruiters understand how to market your background to potential employers. Specifically provide the recruiter with bullet points, if necessary, to convey targeted messages
- II. Be afraid to tell a recruiter no.
- III. Lie or embellish your background. Be honest about everything.
- IV. Use just one. Recruiters often have specific industry and regional expertise. Use as many as are deemed necessary to find the right role for you.

Transitioning into a new career or new position can be an extremely stressful process. Appropriately leveraging available resources can help you to ease the process and to help you make a well informed decision about your career. For more detailed information about executive search firms readers should log on to [www.wetfeet.com](http://www.wetfeet.com) and [www.vault.com](http://www.vault.com). ■

# The Executive Leadership Council Focus

## Eric Watson

Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, Food Lion

By Mario D. Lewis



**N**extGen Network, Inc. Focus interviewed Eric Watson to discuss his views on creating and implementing a diversity and inclusion business

strategy, how to succeed as a Chief Diversity Officer and a number of other career topics. With over 15 years in the field of diversity and inclusion, and as the lead diversity officer for three different companies during that time, Mr. Watson has a wealth of experience and expertise in the field. In his current position as the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at Food Lion, Mr. Watson is directly responsible for the development and implementation of Food Lion's diversity and inclusion business strategy. In addition, he is responsible for leadership and associate development and measuring the company's progress in the areas of culture and environment, diverse supplier development, minority recruiting and retention, education and training, and growing and sustaining a diverse market presence. Prior to joining Food Lion, Mr. Watson was the Executive Director of Diversity and Workforce Capability at the Williams Companies and the Vice President of Global Diversity for the St. Paul Companies Inc.

### **What are the key steps when crafting and implementing a company's business strategy for diversity and inclusion across an organization?**

The process of creating and implementing a diversity and inclusion business strategy are relatively similar from company to company; however, the individual steps are often defined differently depending on the organization. I have broken the process into six key steps: First, define diversity and inclusion broadly so that all aspects are included -- not just people, but also function, level and location. Second, establish leadership commitment,

specifically from the CEO and senior-level management. Third, develop a business case indicating how diversity and inclusion positively impacts the bottom line. Fourth, develop associates through education and training on diversity and inclusion. Fifth, assess and create an inclusive environment so diversity can be valued across the organization. Finally, ensure there is diverse representation at all levels within the organization.

### **What attributes have contributed most to your success in your position at Food Lion and throughout your career?**

There are three attributes that have served me well and allowed me to succeed as a diversity and inclusion thought leader. First, it was vital for me to have a thorough understanding of the business, the business strategy and how the organization generates revenue. With this knowledge, I was able to develop a successful business case for diversity and inclusion at each organization. Second, it was important for me to develop and manage relationships at all levels of the organization -- from the boardroom to the boiler room. Implementing our diversity and inclusion strategy included actively seeking insights and information from all functions and levels of the organization. And finally, you must focus on delivering measurable results. Whether the results are relative to profitability, productivity or services provided to the communities you serve, you will be judged based on your execution and outcomes.

### **As the lead diversity officer for three major organizations across three distinct industries, what are the key lessons learned in creating and executing a diversity and inclusion strategy?**

Based upon my experiences at Food Lion, a supermarket retailer, the Williams Companies, an oil and gas company, and

St. Paul Companies, an insurer, I believe the approach to creating a diversity and inclusion strategy for each organization is quite similar. Regardless of the industry, it is imperative that you: 1) know the business strategy of the company, 2) create the business case for diversity and inclusion, and 3) know the culture and environment you're operating in. The aforementioned six steps would be applicable across each company. Yet, the manner of implementation would vary by company due to each being in a different industry, having a different culture and presenting a different environment.

### **How has membership in The Executive Leadership Council impacted your career? And what do you expect from the organization in the future?**

Since joining The Executive Leadership Council in 2002, it has provided me with tremendous value in my career and personally. As a member, I have increased the focus on my personal development. The organization has provided me access to a great network of professionals from all backgrounds, especially in the field of diversity and inclusion. Additionally, it has given me a greater sense of accountability for developing others and passing on the knowledge and support that The Executive Leadership Council members have given me.

In the future, I expect that The Executive Leadership Council will have an even greater impact on the lives of its members and the other constituencies it supports, as a broader scope of services is provided. The Executive Leadership Council has influence, both globally and politically, and is impacting the social climate of our country. I expect this trend to continue and could see our Annual Recognition Dinner taking place in a foreign country and being organized by our international members.

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**As an active member on a number of Boards of Directors, what recommendations would you give on selecting and participating on a Board?**

As you continue to progress in your career, you will be asked to join various Boards of Directors. Before accepting the offer, do your due diligence to determine if the position fits your value system, offers opportunities for you to grow personally, and will allow you to make a real and tangible contribution to the organization. It is important that any Board position you accept matches your personal

and career requirements and goals. For example, the Boards on which I am a member are primarily associated with promoting diversity and inclusion, which clearly lines up with my personal and career goals. When you have chosen the right Board opportunity, you will make the greatest impact, which is the main purpose of accepting the position.

**What advice would you give NextGen Network, Inc. members as they continue to build their careers?**

In selecting any career path, it is important to know yourself and know what you

want to do while having an understanding of what you do well and what opportunities exist in that area. Once you have selected a direction, be focused in achieving your individual goals and set aggressive time frames. As you progress, ensure that your career, personal and financial goals are balanced so that no one area is lacking. Finally, leave a legacy by creating a path to success for those coming behind you. ■

## Jessica C. Isaacs

### Sr. Vice President of Field Operations and Global Reinsurance, American International Underwriters, a division of American International Group

By Mario D. Lewis



**N**extGen Network, Inc. Spotlight sat down with

Jessica C. Isaacs to get her views and insights on a range of topics

including her career, the impact of diversity in her organization, and her work with The Executive Leadership Council and NextGen Network, Inc. Ms. Isaacs is the Senior Vice President of Field Operations and Global Reinsurance of American International Underwriters (AIU) personal lines a division of American International Group (AIG). AIG is a leading global insurance and financial services company.

**Please describe your position and key responsibilities as SVP of Field Operations and Global Reinsurance, AIU Personal Lines?**

In my current position, I have two main roles and responsibilities. First, I have top and bottom-line responsibility for the personal lines business operations in South America, United Kingdom and Ireland. This includes all insurance products for consumers including auto, home, and other personal insurance products. Secondly, I have global responsibility for all Personal Lines reinsurance treaty placements in all 57 countries where the division operates. In this role, I work with a range of reinsurance brokers and

reinsurance syndicates, mainly Lloyd's of London, to help protect AIG from catastrophic risks within its portfolio.

**What attributes and decisions have contributed most to your success at AIG?**

In any fast-paced organization, it is important to take initiative, take ownership and to be resilient. Anyone taking risks and making strides will face obstacles. Resilience will help make those obstacles less of a roadblock. After working at Allstate Insurance Company for 18 years, I was recruited by AIG. I decided to accept the opportunity because AIG is a company that is internationally-focused. I believed the position would be more challenging and more rewarding. For me, it was quite a risk. However I believed in myself as a self-starter and knew that I could transfer the skills and industry knowledge I had developed. My career at AIG has turned out to be more than I ever could have imagined.

**How are you able to impact diversity at AIG in your role?**

I am an advocate for making the business case for diversity in my organization at all levels. There has to be a clear strategic business purpose for diversity to be successful in an organization. My active role within The Executive Leadership Council

has raised awareness of diversity within AIG and the 20th Anniversary Dinner sponsorship has also highlighted the new partnership between AIG and The Executive Leadership Council.

**As the Chairperson of The Executive Leadership Council 20th Anniversary Dinner, what are your main responsibilities?**

As Chairperson of the Dinner Committee, I have been working hand and hand with my fellow committee members and The Executive Leadership Council staff on the planning and coordination of all logistical aspects of the dinner and other activities surrounding this 20th anniversary milestone. It's been the most enjoyable hard work! It was at times almost like planning a wedding, due to the numerous important activities that have been coordinated to execute the event successfully. However, it has been a rewarding experience for me to work with such a great team of talented people.

**Please describe how were you able to obtain AIG's sponsorship for the event?**

In March of 2005, I invited our then newly appointed CEO, Martin Sullivan, to attend The Executive Leadership Council's CEO Summit. He accepted, even though he had a number of critical issues on his plate at the time. He left the Summit with a great impression and since then has been very supportive of The Executive Leadership Council. AIG became the Lead Sponsor of this year's dinner as a part of Martin's desire to strengthen our partnership with

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The Executive Leadership Council and begin our diversity journey.

**Please describe your experience as an Executive Leadership Council member and what are the main benefits that Executive Leadership Council membership has provided you – career wise and personally?**

My Executive Leadership Council membership has been a life-changing experience for me. I was first approached by a colleague in 2001, however I felt that I was too busy and would not be able to make time to be an effective member. I was next approached in 2003 when I met Carl Brooks at a New York event. I immediately submitted my application, joined and instantly wanted to make a difference. It is an impressive organization. Since then I have become a very active member, elected to the Boards of The Executive Leadership Council and the NextGen Network, Inc. I've been working with them and participating in many other initiatives. In addition to the networking aspects of being an Executive

Leadership Council member, there are many benefits that are derived from being in an environment where we are able to exchange ideas and best practices for advancing careers and promoting diversity.

**Since you have been a member, what changes has the organization undergone and what do you expect the organization to look like in the next few years?**

Since joining The Executive Leadership Council, the organization has continued to evolve in many ways. First, there has been increased emphasis on pipeline development through its commitment to NextGen Network, Inc., the Leadership Institute and various other mentoring programs. Secondly, The Executive Leadership Council has been taking on a greater role in public policy advocacy on issues such as Katrina. Thirdly the group is being viewed with greater prominence as a key voice in corporate America. I expect these trends to continue in the future. Additionally, I expect us to become more sophisticated in addressing member needs outside of the

traditional corporate roles, i.e. entrepreneurs, retirees, political leaders, etc. We will seek to provide a greater level of services to our diverse member groups as we develop our organization.

**Please describe your experience as a Board Member of the NextGen Network, Inc. and what advice would you pass to the members as they continue their careers?**

I have enjoyed my affiliation with the NextGen Network, Inc. and am very impressed with the members. As a Board member, I enjoy providing mentorship and support to the organization. I view mentoring as a two-way street; an exchange of ideas and, believe me, I benefit from the ideas and feedback that I receive from them. These bright executives have talent and energy to surpass all expectations. They are better educated and have more career options and opportunities and they are making use of them. My advice is for them to continue pushing the envelope and utilizing all the tools that are available to keep pursuing your goals. ■

## NextGen Network, Inc. Welcomes New Members

By President Sekou Kaalund



**O**n behalf of the membership, I want to welcome all of our new members to the premier organization for

African-American mid-level managers. NextGen Network, Inc. is focused on developing the pipeline of future executives, and in fulfilling this mission, the organization has evolved since its inception in 1999. NextGen Network, Inc. was founded with a simple goal: create an African American corporate leadership pipeline organization that continues to mentor and support Executive Leadership Council essay competition winners and shadow mentees. As NextGen Network, Inc. evolved, there was a desire to broaden that outreach to attract high caliber, young African American professionals that had not participated in Council programs. The Professional Class Membership process was created. today

the majority of new NextGen Network, Inc. members join the organization through the Professional Class process. In June 2006, NextGen Network, Inc. inducted its largest class of new members. The organization is excited about this diverse group of corporate leaders with experience in law, consulting, IT, marketing, and entrepreneurship. NextGen Network, Inc. and its members have received great visibility this year, and the organization's success will continue to be fueled by hardworking and committed members who desire not only to receive benefits, but also to making a contribution.

**Congratulations NextGen Network, Inc. Professional Membership Class of 2006!**

- **Penny Allen**, Director, Information Systems, Prudential
- **Regina Brown**, Director, Marketing, Citigroup

- **Tulani Gibbscombe**, Associate, Clifford Chance
- **Gayle Hawkins**, Diversity Specialist, UBS Wealth Management International, Associate Director
- **Tamara Nall**, Associate, Booz Allen Hamilton
- **Wokie Nwabueze**, Director, Resolution Consultant, Prudential
- **Dele Oladapo**, Vice President, Information Systems, Prudential
- **Natasha Pallan**, Senior Associate, Prudential
- **Regenia Sanders**, Senior Manager, Accenture
- **Lovell Saunders**, CEO and President, DaVinci Consulting, LLC
- **Carol Sloane**, Director, Stable Value Markets, Prudential
- **Erica Warley-Cunningham**, Sr. Staff Consultant, Public Affairs, Verizon
- **Kimberly Watson**, Lead Analyst, Risk Management, Prudential ■

# Members on the Move

By Glynda Brown



Kevin Hinton has taken on a new role as a member of Discovery Education's business planning team. Discovery Education is a division of Discovery Communications Inc. and a leading provider of online education products to teachers and students in grades K-12. Mr. Hinton's team develops strategies to grow the Education division via the development of new products and the acquisition of other businesses. Discovery Education is based in Bethesda, Maryland.

Also, Mr. Hinton authored the article "Demystifying The Venture Capital Deal," which was published in the Spring 2006 issue of National Association of Investment Companies, Journal of EDM Finance. The article is the first of a series of three and is to be followed by the second in this series later this Fall.



Regenia R. Sanders, Senior Manager, Consumer & Industrial Products, Accenture Atlanta was among fifty-

seven emerging American leaders representing a broad array of professions and from 17 states and the District of Columbia. Ms. Sanders and the other participants have been awarded the prestigious Marshall Memorial Fellowship for 2006 and will spend three weeks in Europe visiting institutions, societies and cultures and learning about economic, political and social issues facing the transatlantic relationship. These Fellows are the counterpart to young European leaders who come to the United States on a similar exchange program also sponsored by the German Marshall Fund of the United States. They are selected through a competitive, nationwide process and come from politics, government, the military, media, business, and the non-profit sector. During the program, Ms. Sanders will travel to Brussels, Belgium, Ankara, Turkey, Frankfurt, Germany, Prague, The Czech Republic, and Berlin will meet with European business leaders, heads of state and policy makers.



Lovell Saunders founder DaVinci Consulting LLC, a boutique implementation and project management consult-

ing firm, is happy to celebrate the company's one year anniversary on October 17th 2006. The company currently has six employees and a major contract with a Fortune 500 company. The firm specializes in helping large and small companies transform their strategies to results through well defined BMBOK principles and a comprehensive plan. Mr. Saunders' company works closely with clients on a day to day or as needed basis to ensure that their critical path and key milestones are identified and tracked against cost and schedule. For more information, please visit the company website at [www.DavinciHQ.com](http://www.DavinciHQ.com)

Panya Lei Yarber joined the Houston Independent School District as a Business Manager on August 7, 2006. Ms. Yarber, who has relocated to Houston from Atlanta where she was previously employed with Cingular, is a Broad Resident through the Broad Foundation.



Dele Oladapo, Vice President, Information Systems for Prudential Financial's Corporate Technology

Management department was promoted effective, September 18, 2006. Mr. Oladapo's promotion recognizes his expanded job responsibilities and superior achievements in Corporate Technology.

Additionally, Mr. Oladapo was recently installed as a board member of the Mental Health Association of Essex County, in New Jersey.



Reggie Harwell was elected to serve on the Board of Directors of Union Settlement Association in New York. Since 1895,

Union Settlement Association has been dedicated to solving urban problems in East Harlem. Through education programs and human services, the agency promotes leadership development and fosters economic self-sufficiency to help individuals and families build a stronger community. Operating from 17 locations, Union Settlement annually serves more than 13,000 people of all ages with effective programs in education, childcare, counseling, senior services, nutrition, the arts, job training and economic development. Union Settlement is a large local employer with a staff of 800 people. For more information on the organization, please visit the website at [www.unionsettlement.org](http://www.unionsettlement.org) ■

# NextGen Network, Inc.'s Professional Class Membership Process

By Kevin Hinton

NextGen Network, Inc. will accept applications for Professional Class Membership beginning November 1, 2006. Professional Class Membership candidates must be African American executives who demonstrate three key characteristics:

- Promise for growth in a professional career,
- Excellence and commitment to academics and
- Commitment to community service.

To apply for Professional Class Membership, candidates with the above mentioned key characteristics must submit the following:

- Five essays of up to 300 words each. NextGen Network asks candidates to address topics including career goals, views on leadership and expected NextGen Network contributions
- Recommendation letter from a member of The Executive Leadership Council or NextGen Network, Inc.
- Recommendation letter from a professional peer

- Resume
- Biography
- Completed and Signed application form

A selection committee comprised of Executive Leadership Council and NextGen Network, Inc. members will assess the quality of candidate applications; the potential demonstrated by candidates to become business leaders at the highest level; and the contributions that candidates will be expected to make to NextGen Network, Inc.. Candidates must receive the unanimous support of the selection committee in order to be invited into the membership.

NextGen Network, Inc. will make applications available on [www.nextgennetwork.com](http://www.nextgennetwork.com) beginning October 15, 2006 and completed application packages must be postmarked by December 10, 2006. Membership notifications will be sent out in March 2007. ■

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## Career Focus: Workplace Socializing - Use Good Common Sense

By Janice Harrison Blackwell, *Visions + Solutions for Success*

What is proper etiquette when it comes to workplace socializing? My advice is to always "use discretion and good common sense." The safest rule is to conduct yourself as if you were attending a church social. This will lessen your chances of committing what I call a "FPB" (Foolish Professional Blunder).

Climbing the corporate ladder is not only about your strong technical skills and your great work ethic. Your interpersonal skills in a professional setting are equally as important. Below is an anecdotal example of a "FPB" that cost a few young professionals a major career opportunity. It will help you identify what not to do when socializing in the workplace.

A few years ago, I participated in a recruitment effort for my company at a National Black MBA conference. After interviewing many candidates for an important position, the recruitment team narrowed the process to the top four candidates. These candidates had successfully passed the first round of interviews and they, along with their spouse or significant other, were invited to a social event consisting of dinner and drinks with company representatives. What they were not told was that this event was round two of the interview process. Several company representatives had been planted around the event to determine how these candidates handled themselves in a social setting. We began to notice that after the candidates had a

drink or two; they started letting their guard down. With their egos charging, and wine taking effect, the conversation with each of the candidates began to change. One candidate shared their goal to settle down in the future, declaring that "those days of hard work were over." Another began to talk about his active involvement with a particular organization that raised our concerns about his judgment. I listened in amazement, wondering at what point the candidates forgot what was shared with them about the Company's conservative, fast-paced, demanding culture. By the end of the event, my colleagues and I realized that our recruitment effort was a success. We had created a social setting that revealed the true character of each of our candidates and only one passed. What I found most interesting was that the three unsuccessful candidates left the event with big egos, unaware that they had each made a

*Cont'd on page 11*

huge “FPB” which cost each of them a great career opportunity.

Remember, there is always someone watching and assessing you and possibly, without your knowledge, interviewing you. Whenever you attend a

social activity at work, ask yourself these two questions:

- 1) If a hidden camera were rolling would it capture me embarrassing myself?
- 2) Do I want others to view me as a comedian or as a polished, professional star?

It is your decision on when and how to socialize, just be sure to do it using proper etiquette, *discretion and good common sense.* ■

## NextGen Network, Inc. Activity Overview

### FUTURE EVENTS

November 1 – December 10, 2006

**NextGen Network, Inc.  
Professional Class Membership  
Application Acceptance Period**

### PAST EVENTS

February 25, 2006

**NextGen Network, Inc.  
Leadership Retreat**  
AXA-Equitable Headquarters; New York, New York

April 9-12, 2006

**Institute for Leadership Development & Research  
Strengthening the Pipeline: Critical Factors for Successful Leaders**  
The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes; Orlando, FL

April 13, 2006

**Laying the Groundwork for Success—NextGen Northeast Networking Social**  
AXA-Equitable Headquarters; New York, NY

April 29, 2006

**NextGen Network, Inc.  
Leadership Retreat II**  
New York, NY

June 1 – 4, 2006

**NextGen Network, Inc.  
Spring General Membership Meeting**  
The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes; Orlando, FL

June 14 -15, 2006

**Black Women’s Leadership Summit**  
New York, NY

June 22, 2006

**Financial Planning Seminar and Networking Reception  
Hosted by Prudential Financial Vice-Chairman, John Strangfeld**  
Prudential Financial Headquarters; Newark, NJ

September 16, 2006

**Southeast Area NextGen Network, Inc. & Friends Event  
Presented by Food Lion  
The Ragin Mysterious Yacht**  
Lake Norman; Charlotte, NC

October 26, 2006

**The Executive Leadership Council  
6th Annual CEO Diversity Summit**  
Washington, DC

October 26, 2006

**The Executive Leadership Council  
20th Anniversary Recognition Dinner**  
Hilton Washington Hotel; Washington, DC

## NEXTGEN NETWORK, INC. 2006 LEADERSHIP

### **President, Sekou Kaalund**

Director, Head of Strategy, Securities and Fund Services, Citigroup

### **Vice President, Joy Booker**

Vice President, New York Life Investment Management

### **Treasurer, Jacqueline Jenkins**

Strategic Sourcing Manager, Ann Taylor, Inc.

### **Secretary, Bradlee Benn**

Director - Global Product Strategy and Product Management, American Express

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#### **Laurence Latimer**

Products Group, Digicel USA

### **Corporate Governance**

#### **Latoya Rembert**

State Legislative Coordinator, CMOR

### **Fundraising/Corporate Development**

#### **Daren Roberts**

Associate, Corporate Finance, Prudential Financial

### **Executive Leadership Council Relationship**

#### **Crystal German**

Director of Finance, NC Institute of Minority Economic Development

### **Membership**

#### **Kevin Hinton**

Discovery Education, Discovery Communications

### **Connections/Development**

#### **Jessica Che-Mponda**

Vice President, Internal Consulting, Citigroup

### **Communications**

#### **Glynda Brown**

Vice President, Citigroup Private Bank

### **Community Outreach**

#### **Reggie Harwell**

Agent, AXA Financial

### **Stewardship/Reporting**

#### **Tyrone Thomas**

Associate, Citigroup

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## Board of Directors

### **Carl Brooks**

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The Executive Leadership Foundation

### **Sekou Kaalund**

Director, Head of Strategy, Securities and Fund Services, Citigroup

### **David Thomas**

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### **Joy Booker**

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### **Kenneth Tanji**

Vice President, Finance, Prudential Financial

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### **Latoya Rembert**

State Legislative Coordinator, CMOR

### **Camilla McGhee**

Program Director, The Executive Leadership Council

Please send inquiries about this publication to:  
[info@nextgennetwork.com](mailto:info@nextgennetwork.com) • [www.nextgennetwork.com](http://www.nextgennetwork.com)