

Part II: The Economics of Black Personalities

Who are Important Black Economists?

There is a great controversy afoot concerning Black economists in the United States. A recent study by Prof. Gregory Price, Chairman of the Economics Department at Morehouse College and a past president of the National Economic Association, contends that only 1.6 percent of the economics faculties at the top 30 universities in America are Black. Scholars have derived several explanations for this outcome: Racism; Black economists' ability to compete (i.e., a deficiency in training); too few Blacks holding and receiving doctoral degrees in economics; too many Black doctoral degree holders accepting employment in government and industry; etc. Each of these explanations may have a degree of merit; however, it remains a conundrum why there are so few Black economists. About one fact you can be certain, a skilled economist has full comprehension of what keeps nations afloat and that may be too much knowledge for too many Blacks to possess. Before providing a judgmentally-derived list of the top Black economists (based on a combination of notoriety and scholarship), it is important to note that economists are powerful people around the world with many nations of the world being led (presidents and prime ministers) by economists. You will recall that the former chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, was often called "the most powerful man in the world" during the 1990s. Three Black economists have served as members of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board: Andrew F. Brimmer; Emmett J. Rice; and Roger Ferguson. In addition, you should note that only one Black person, Sir Arthur Lewis, has been a recipient of the Nobel Prize in economics (Sir Arthur Lewis was a native of the St. Lucia, an island nation in the Caribbean).

Important Black American Economists:

- Andrew Brimmer, former Member of the Federal Reserve Board
- Roger Ferguson, former Member of the Federal Reserve Board
- William Darity, Duke University
- Glen Loury, Brown University
- Julianne Malveaux, Bennett College
- Patrick Mason, Florida State University
- Margaret Simms, Urban Institute
- Thomas Sowell, Stanford University's Hoover Institute
- William Spriggs, Howard University
- Walter Williams, George Mason University

Who are Distinguished Black CEO's?

While Black Enterprise Magazine provides a list of heads (chief executive officers (CEOs)) of the top Black enterprises each year, the list below highlights distinguished Black CEOs of American corporations. Usually, you will not hear much about these personalities; however, rest assured that they are some of the best and brightest business minds in the world to be able to sit in their “cat bird seats.”

Distinguished Black American Chief Executive Officers:

- Kenneth I. Chenault, American Express
- Errol B. Davis, Jr., Alliant Energy
- Reginald E. Davis, Wachovia
- Robert L. Johnson, RLJ Companies, Inc.
- Aylwin Lewis, K Mart
- E. Stanley O'Neal, Merrill Lynch & Co.
- Richard D. Parsons, Time Warner
- John W. Thompson, Symantec Corporation
- Pamela Thompson-Graham, CNBC
- Oprah Winfrey, Harpo Productions

Who are Notable Black Scientists and Engineers?

Today, we live in a relatively high technology world. In fact, the nation's economy is able to grow, in large measure, due to its ability to do more with less. We do more with less by identifying new technologies that enable the production of new goods and services using increasingly efficient methods. The search for the "Holy Grail" has now been translated into the search for new technologies: To improve the quantity and quality of our lives at reduced costs. The individuals at the heart of this process are scientists. Whether they be biologists, physicists, chemists, or engineers, they are transforming our world right before our very eyes.

It is unfortunate that we hear so little about great Black scientists and engineers. Because we hear so little about them, it is increasingly difficult to identify Black youth who wish to pursue such careers. The latter outcome is sad because America continues to turn increasingly in the science and technology direction and will increasingly support those interested in these fields. Nevertheless, Black scientists and engineers are at the center of science and technology breakthroughs in the world today. We provide a selected list these great people below.

Notable Black Scientists and Engineers:

- Rodney C. Adkins, IBM, Somers, New York
- Lisa Barker, Ball Aerospace & Technology Corporation, Boulder, Colorado
- Dr. Charles Brooks, MITRE Corporation, Eatontown, New Jersey
- Dr. Benjamin S. Carson, Sr. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland
- Dr. Mark E. Dean, IBM, San Jose, California
- Dr. S. James Gates, Jr., University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
- Dr. Wyllstyn Hill, Raytheon, Tucson, Arizona
- Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Dr. Shirley M. Malcom, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Washington, D.C.
- Dr. Dawn Wright, Oregon State University, Portland, Oregon

Source: http://www.mitre.org/news/releases/06/beya_12_28_2006.html ;
http://www.raytheon.com/feature/rtn07_beya/;
<http://domino.research.ibm.com/comm/pr.nsf/pages/bio.dean.html> ;
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<http://www.ballaerospace.com/page.jsp?page=30&id=240>; and
http://www.blackengineeroftheyear.org/v3/news_display.php?id=32. All sources were retrieved from the Internet on September 23, 2007.

Who are Distinguished Black Educators?

We are as good as we are smart. We become smart, in part, through training. High-quality training is best derived from great educators. Black Americans have a long history of excellence in education. In fact, we can go back to the 1830's and one of the first formal and overt attempts to educate Blacks in "Normal" or "High" schools so that they could teach those at the elementary school levels. Today, there are over 100 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), many of which began as Normal schools. But we have traversed well beyond that point; Black scholars teach at the top universities in the land and excel in those posts. Therefore, it is not difficult to form a list of distinguished Black scholars who span several fields, and who teach across the spectrum of education levels.

The list below is mainly of Black educators who have received recognition recently for their excellence and expertise in transmitting knowledge in selected academic fields:

- Dr. Benjamin Canada, Texas Association of School Boards
- Dr. Sharon L. Fries-Britt, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
- Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Dr. S. James Gates, Jr., University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
- Dr. Raymond L. Johnson, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland
- Dr. William A. Massey, Institute for Mathematics and Its Applications, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Dr. Ernest Morrell, University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California
- Dr. Henry N. Tisdale, Claflin University, Orangeburg, South Carolina
- Reg Weaver, President, National Education Association

Sources: <http://www.aasa.org/newsroom/pressdetail.cfm?ItemNumber=8389>;
<http://www.education.umd.edu/EDPA/cv/Fries-BrittCVJanuary2007.pdf>;
<http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/scitech/release.cfm?ArticleID=1399>;
<http://www.timesanddemocrat.com/articles/2007/08/21/opinion/doc46ca2ace1abc2217107946.txt>; http://engineering.princeton.edu/news/massey_prize ;
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/sasalum/newsltr/spring03/black_white_read.htm ;
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~amciv/faculty/gates.shtml> ; and,
<http://www.ernestmorrell.com/homepage.html>. All sources were retrieved from the Internet on September 22, 2007.

Who are Distinguished Black Literary Personalities?

Black Americans spend well over \$300 million on books each year. That is a little less than \$10 on books for every Black man, woman, and child. Ten dollars will not buy very much of a book today; however, this level of expenditure shows that Black Americans are reading. Consequently, it is important to provide in *BlackEconomics: A Primer* a list of the most widely read Black authors today. Since the Harlem Renaissance and writers like Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Zora Neal Hurston, there has probably not been a period when such a wide array of popular Black literary personalities are producing novels for the Black American audience to consume. It goes without saying that these authors are also read widely by the broader American audience.

It is important to note that, like all other groups, Black Americans read more than just fiction. However, it is fiction that reflects the scope and nature of the Black American experience, and fiction provides clues about the past and future lives of Blacks in America.

Distinguished Black American Authors of Fiction:

- Maya Angelou, *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
- Tina McElroy Ansa, *Baby of the Family*
- Breena Clarke, *River Cross My Heart*
- Pearl Cleage, *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*
- Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*
- Terry McMillan, *Waiting to Exhale*
- Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize Winner, *Beloved*
- Walter Mosely, *Devil In A Blue Dress (and other Easy Rawlins Books)*
- Omar Tyree, *Last Street Novel*
- Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*

Who are Distinguished Black Preachers?

There is no more integral component of the Black community than the Black church. Consequently, in order to comprehend the economics of Black communities, one must comprehend the purpose, nature, and operation of the churches within those communities. In turn, the key to comprehending the Black church is to know the churches' leadership. Therefore, *BlackEconomics: A Primer* provides a list of Black Preachers that are ruling the day in Black communities. However, it is suggested that their performance be assessed based on not only the spiritual conditions of the communities over which they preside, but also on the economic conditions that prevail in those communities.

Distinguished Black American Preachers:

- Pastor Creflo A. Dollar, Creflo Dollar Ministries, College Park, Georgia
- Dr. Floyd H. Flake, The Greater Allen A.M.E. Cathedral, New York, New York
- Dr. Frederick Haynes, III, Friendship West Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas
- Bishop Donald Hilliard, Jr., Donald Hilliard Ministries, Jackson, New Jersey
- Bishop T. D. Jakes, Potter's House & T.D. Jakes Ministries, Houston, Texas
- Prof. Carolyn Knight, Can Do Ministries, Smyrna, Georgia
- Dr. Frederick K. Price, Ever Increasing Faith Ministries, Los Angeles, California
- Imam Siraj Wahhaj, Masjid At-Taqwa, New York, New York
- Dr. Renita J. Weems, Nashville, Tennessee
- Dr. Cornell West, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
- Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois

Sources:

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http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1077/is_n1_v53/ai_20013882;
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=12348760>; and
<http://www.religionnewsblog.com/4820/one-imam-traces-path-of-islam-in-black-america>.
All sources were retrieved from the Internet on September 21, 2007.

Who are Distinguished Black Entertainers?

It is common knowledge that, like White entertainers, Black entertainers have always lived lives apart from average Black Americans. In many cases, Black entertainers have accumulated great wealth. Often, they use their wealth to improve conditions for Black Americans through business investments in Black communities, by providing academic scholarships, or simply by creating jobs as part of their own entertainment operations. Hence, Black entertainers are able to garner double favor from Black Americans—through their entertainment and through their philanthropy. It is not uncommon for Black entertainers to become so popular as to be able to make a significant economic difference in the lives of many Black Americans.

A cautionary note is in order: Black entertainers can create adverse outcomes for Black Americans to the extent that they participate in the production of entertainment that presents negative images of Black Americans. That is, when Black entertainers accept stereotypical roles that characterize Blacks in a negative light, then they harm Blacks because the world imbibes those images and may then adopt negative attitudes toward Blacks. These attitudes may ultimately play out in the economy and produce adverse outcomes for Blacks: Lower employment, lower income, and fewer opportunities.

Below, we provide the names of 14 distinguished Black Americans entertainers today; the list spans movie and television personalities and artists from the music industry.

Distinguished Black American Entertainers:

- Halle Berry, Actress, Academy Award Winner
- Mary J Blige, R&B, Hip-Hop Artist
- Mariah Carey, R&B Artist
- Fifty Cents, Hip-Hop Artist
- Sean “Puffy” Combs, Hip Hop Artist and Entrepreneur
- Jamie Foxx, Actor
- Jay-Z, Hip-Hop Artist and Entrepreneur
- Samuel Jackson, Actor
- Martin Lawrence, Actor
- Ludacris, R&B, Hip-Hop Artist
- Will Smith, Actor
- Denzel Washington, Actor, Academy Award Winner
- Kanye West, R&B, Hip-Hop Artist
- Oprah Winfrey, Actress, Television Talk Show Host and Entrepreneur

Who are Distinguished Black Coaches?

Coaching has been the second rung of the four-step ladder for Black American participation in sports at the professional and college levels. First, Black players were accepted into the athletic ranks; second, Black coaches are brought in—usually from the players ranks; third, Black managers are permitted into athletic organizations; and fourth, and finally, Black owners are able to secure the right to control and benefit from Black athletic prowess. Below, two distinguished coaches are listed from the ranks of professional football, basketball, and baseball, and for college football and basketball. A question that warrants research is the extent to which Black coaches receive compensation that is relatively comparable to the compensation that is received by non-Black coaches?

National Football League (NFL)

- Tony Dungy, Head Coach, Indianapolis Colts
- Lovie Smith, Head Coach, Chicago Bears

National Basketball Association (NBA)

- Avery Johnson, Head Coach, Dallas Mavericks
- Sam Mitchell, Head Coach, Toronto Raptors

Major League Baseball (MLB)

- Willie Randolph, Manager, New York Mets
- Ron Washington, Manager, Texas Rangers

National Collegiate Athletic Association Football (NCAAF)

- Randy Shannon, Head Coach, University of Miami
- Tyrone Willingham, Head Coach, University of Washington

National Collegiate Athletic Association Basketball (NCAAB)

- Tubby Smith, Head Coach, University of Minnesota
- Nolan Richards, Head Coach, International Teams

Sources: NFL—<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6944981>; NBA—<http://www.nba.com/statistics/encyc/Coach.jsp?sortOrder=4&conf=all&loc=all&season=all&active=Y&pre=all&team=all&pRd=all&x=26&y=7>; MLB—<http://www.frostillustrated.com/full.php?sid=1031>; NCAAF—http://www.blackathlete.net/artman2/publish/Commentary_1/The_NCAA_s_Shabby_Record_With_Black_Football_Coaches.shtml; NCAAB—<http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=2808406> and <http://bcasports.cstv.com/genrel/061407aab.html>. All sources were retrieved from the Internet on September 21, 2007.

Who are Distinguished Black Athletes?

Historically, Blacks have shown an ability to enter the ranks of professional and college sports and to rise to dominant positions. No question about it; today, football and basketball, and to a much lesser extent, baseball, are the key sports where Blacks excel. Nevertheless, Blacks have shown an ability to dominate other sports as well: e.g., golf and tennis. Black participation in professional and college sports is common place and the focus has long turned from will Blacks participate to how many Black players on a team are appropriate to optimize returns for mainly White owners; we must not forget that Whites represent the primary fan base for professional and college sports.

Below, two distinguished Black athletes are listed for the aforementioned professional and college sports categories. Again, we must inquire whether these professional and college athletes receive compensation and acclaim that are comparable to that received by their non-Black counterparts?

National Football League (NFL)

- LaDainian Tomlinson, Running Back, San Diego Chargers
- Tiki Barber, Running Back, New York Giants

National Basketball Association (NBA)

- Kobe Bryant, Guard, Los Angeles Lakers
- Dwayne Wade, Guard, Miami Heat

Major League Baseball (MLB)

- Barry Bonds, Outfielder, San Francisco Giants
- Derek Jeter, Shortstop, New York Yankees

National Collegiate Athletic Association Football (NCAAF)

- Darren McFadden, Running Back, University of Arkansas
- Steve Slaton, Running Back, University of West Virginia

National Collegiate Athletic Association Basketball (NCAAB)

- Greg Oden, Center, Ohio State University
- Alando Tucker, Guard, University of Wisconsin

Sources: NFL--<http://www.nfl.com/probowl/story?id=09000d5d8002269e&template=without-video&confirm=true>; NBA—<http://sports.espn.go.com/nba/allstar2007/news/story?id=2743007>; MLB—http://mlb.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20070528&content_id=1990778&vkey=news_mlb&fext=.jsp&c_id=mlb and http://mlb.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20070530&content_id=1994484&vkey=news_mlb&fext=.jsp&c_id=mlb; NCAAF—<http://sports.espn.go.com/ncf/heisman07/index>; and NCAAB—http://www.collegehoopsnet.com/new/story/collegehoops_net_all_american_team40629. All sources were retrieved from the Internet on September 21, 2007.

Who are Distinguished Blacks in the Media: Television, Radio, and Newspapers?

Like Black entertainers, certain Black media personalities are very important players in their industries and create much good for Blacks. When a Black newscaster presents a more accurate and/or balanced news story about Blacks than would have been presented by a non-Black, then Black Americans benefit. As a general rule, Black media personalities do not earn the salaries paid to Black entertainers, but there are exceptions to this rule. Those Black media personalities who earn large salaries can play the same philanthropic role played by Black entertainers; those who earn less, but who have a strong regional or topical footprint, can serve as advocates for Black Americans.

The cautionary note from the entry on Black entertainers is represented here. Black media personalities can create adverse outcomes for Black Americans to the extent that they participate in the production of media that presents negative images of Black Americans. That is, when Black media personalities accept stereotypical roles that characterize Blacks in a negative light, then they harm Blacks because the world imbibes these images and then adopts negative attitudes toward Blacks. These attitudes ultimately play out in the economy and produce adverse outcomes for Blacks: Lower employment, lower income, and fewer opportunities.

Distinguished Media (Television, Radio, and Print) Personalities:

- James Brown, CBS (“The NFL Today”)
- Ed Gordon, NPR (“News and Notes”)
- Greg Gumble, CBS (“The NFL on CBS”)
- Bob Herbert, *The New York Times* (“Op-Ed”)
- Gwen Ifill, PBS (“The News Hour” and “Washington Week”)
- Tom Joyner, KISS 104.1 (“Tom Joyner Morning Show”)
- Al Roker, NBC (“Today”)
- Michelle Singletary, *The Washington Post* (“The Color of Money”)
- Tavis Smiley, NPR and PBS (“TAVIS Talks” and “The Tavis Smiley Show”)
- Michael Wilbon, *The Washington Post*