



Harry C. Alford President & CEO

For these last twenty years, NBCC President/CEO and co-founder Harry C. Alford has established himself as perhaps the nation's preeminent champion of African American business empowerment. From a visionary concept of what Blacks need to do to fully seize their place in the economic mainstream, Mr. Alford has built a global organization that has earned a place at the table in the White House and at the top levels of Corporate America.

As the intellectual and spiritual linchpin of the NBCC, Mr. Alford has been responsible for opening doors that have led to billions of dollars in new business for Black owned firms throughout the nation. His courage and leadership have been noted by all in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. His relentless energy and advocacy is helping forge international business opportunities for African Americans and emerging entrepreneurs in Africa, the Caribbean, South America and the rest of the African Diaspora. For this work he was formally named a Cultural Ambassador by the US State Department. A native of California, Mr. Alford has made his mark at the highest levels of both the private and public sectors. He matriculated at the University of Wisconsin via an athletic scholarship (football). After earning top honors as Company Commander in the Army's Officer Candidate School class (OC3-72), Mr. Alford put his leadership skills to work in a series of key sales and executive positions at Fortune 100 companies such as Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson and the Sara Lee Corporation. Mr. Alford has led large trade missions to Brazil, Ghana, Kenya and various nations in the Caribbean. Recently, he helped establish the French African Diaspora Chamber of Commerce in Paris, France. The birth and growth of the National Black Chamber of Commerce is consistent with the dynamic growth of African American owned firms in the United States – the fastest growing segment in the nation per the US Census Bureau.

Mr. Alford is an award winning columnist for the National Newspaper Publishers Association and consults and speaks on business matters to groups and agencies throughout the nation. He proudly served on the NNPA Foundation Board of Directors. He is an [active member of the Board of Directors of the US Chamber of Commerce](#) where he chairs the Government Oversight and Consumer Affairs Committee. He is a member of the 2008 Health Sector Assembly which is a think tank of national leaders concerned about healthcare. As a consultant, he has developed business models tailored to specific corporations and public agencies. Mr. Alford is regularly called upon by Congress to testify on various legislative initiatives related to small business development, the Gulf Coast rebuilding, e-commerce, healthcare, energy, tax reform and global trade issues. He received national recognition while delivering testimony concerning the recent Cap and Trade Energy debate. [He was inducted into the Oxnard High School Hall of Fame in 2013.](#) Mr. and Mrs. Alford reside in Virginia and have two sons who were scholar athletes at the University of Maryland (lacrosse).



Kay DeBow Alford

Co-founder, National Black Chamber of Commerce

Founder, PanAfrican Entrepreneurs Conference

As an African-American woman and an entrepreneur, the co-founder of the National Black Chamber of Commerce and founder of the PanAfrican Entrepreneurs Conference, has a unique perspective on what it takes to succeed in today's global economy. Ms. DeBow, who co-founded the NBCC in 1993, honed her business development skills over several years in administration with the Hoosier Minority Chamber of Commerce and as an owner of successful franchise and independent video stores.

Since assuming a key leadership role with the NBCC, Ms. DeBow has earned national and international respect in corporate circles for her stewardship of the chamber's signature annual convention. In addition to her daily responsibilities for the organization's personnel, budgets, administration, newsletter and event planning, she has coordinated and supervised every aspect of the world's largest and most influential convention dedicated to African-American business development.

The NBCC's annual convention routinely attracts more than 400 chamber affiliate members and business owners, plus representatives from over 30 government agencies and 100 major corporations. True to her mission, Ms. DeBow uses the convention as both a practical and symbolic tool to promote Black business. In choosing a city to host an NBCC convention, Ms. DeBow told a reporter, "What we look for when we determine a convention site is the number of black businesses that can serve us while we are there - businesses like printers, audio/visual, hotels, caterers, reception halls ... places where we can go to spend our dollars with black businesses."

She conceived the PanAfrican Entrepreneurs Conference as an opportunity to bring together businesses representing the Diaspora for collaborations and joint ventures.

Ms. DeBow has also been recognized by the White House and international trade groups as one of the leading advocates of international business development opportunities for Latin American, South American and African nations. Ms. DeBow has played a critical part in the organization's ongoing trade initiatives with countries such as Surinam, Kenya, Ghana, Brazil, France, Cuba, Colombia, and Botswana.

A graduate of Indiana University, Ms. DeBow is heir to a long line of African-American pioneers. Her father, for example, was one of the original five Tuskegee Airman, the legendary Black military pilots who have been immortalized in movies and literature. Both her father and mother were among the first group of African-American educators to integrate the Indiana public school system. Her maternal grandfather, William Weir Stuart, travelled the world with John Philip Sousa (composer of Stars and Stripes forever) as his personal assistant.

Ms. DeBow resides in Virginia with her husband. They are proud parents of their 2 sons who are currently enrolled in MBA programs at Johns Hopkins and Babson College.