

It has been 10 years since the first edition of Who's Who in Black Columbus was unveiled and shared with the Columbus community. Since that time, it has become one of the most visible diversity-related publications in Central Ohio. Throughout the years, we have stayed consistent with our mission of celebrating, documenting and recognizing the contributions that African Americans are making to the success of our communities, families, and ultimately our nation. These stories are so important as they go beyond the celebrities and "usual suspects" portrayed in the mainstream media and reach deep into our organizations, businesses and communities where African Americans are making a positive difference every day. We at Who's Who Publishing have accepted the challenge of uncovering and telling these stories not only in Columbus but also in more than 25 other cities across the country.



We could not have accomplished all of this and become the largest directory publisher in the country featuring African Americans without the support of our sponsors and advertisers. In the early stages of our growth, these forward thinking companies understood the value of our publication and the importance of diversity to their businesses. They knew that their organizations were more successful by being diverse and that they would benefit from the innovation and creativity that comes with diverse environments. As partners we have worked with these organizations promoting their brands, services and opportunities with the goal of assisting them in their quest to become preferred employers and preferred businesses. These partnerships remain critical to the growth of our business and to the success of those organizations supporting the work that we do at Who's Who Publishing.

As I look back over the 10 years of producing the book in Columbus, I am particularly proud of the work that has been done to get the books into the hands of young people. Our Thousand Books for a Thousand Kids program started in Columbus and has spread to the other 25 cities that we serve. Through these publications our youth can see the wide range of opportunities and careers available to them. They can see that African Americans are already finding success in these careers. They can read about the paths these individuals took to get to where they are. They can follow these blueprints of success to achieve their own dreams. They can see that no dream is too big, not even the presidency of the United States is out of their reach.

Columbus has not only modeled the way for our youth initiatives, it has also helped our company to see that diversity and inclusion goes beyond what African Americans are doing. True diversity includes everyone and ultimate success is achieved when all sectors of the community are valued. This has led to Columbus being the first city to produce a Latino book and a GBLT book. This model is now in the beginning stages for replication in our other markets.

So, thank you Columbus for 10 years of growth and progress. Thank you for being the fertile ground on which Who's Who Publishing has been planted and thank you for allowing these seeds to grow across our nation. ■

