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1988

## Opportunities in Television: A Guidebook for Black Women

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**OPPORTUNITIES IN TELEVISION  
A GUIDEBOOK FOR BLACK WOMEN**

**By**

**Katherine Naomi Lucas-Johnson**



2020  
1987

## GETTING STARTED IN THE BROADCAST INDUSTRY

### A GUIDEBOOK FOR BLACK WOMEN

Getting started won't be easy. Remember, everyone who makes a career in the television industry has to pay some dues. I remember when I decided to direct my undergraduate work toward achieving a degree in Mass Communications; I thought that I would graduate from Marymount Manhattan College and become the Black female version of Walter Cronkite within five years. Little did I know of the real world of the television industry and the challenges that would lie ahead. I did not end up in front of the camera; ten years later, I am in a general administrative position for a local television station in what I consider my hometown, St. Louis, Missouri. I am considered an official of the company with general responsibilities that relate to employee career development, scholarships, minorities and women recruitment, and some general community relations work. I have been in this position for about five years. I do not begin to pretend to know everything there is to know about the television industry. However, because of my position, I have had the opportunity to be exposed to other Black women professionals in the business who work in other areas and have gained a lot of knowledge about organizations, educational opportunities, recruitment and the general workings of a television station.

The first thing I would suggest to any woman interested in this business is to get some basic knowledge and skills in the field of communications. This can be done very easily, as most colleges, junior colleges and universities offer degree and non-degree programs with concentration in Mass Communications, and/or Broadcast Journalism.

This guidebook speaks to the needs of young Black women who are interested in entering the world of Mass Communications, especially those

interested in television. A college degree is no longer an optional benefit; it is a necessity for most television positions. This is especially true for Black women, if those Blacks are among those women who wish to achieve the kind of professional status that will allow them to make what is considered in the business world as GOOD MONEY. It is true that some technical jobs such as broadcast technician positions can be achieved without a college degree, (they require training from a technical school in basic electrical courses and occasionally FCC licensing). To be a successful Black professional in the television industry, however, acquiring the appropriate educational credentials is an essential first step. Having a degree not only allows the individual a wider variety of career choices, for a Black applicant it provides the extra credibility sometimes needed to even be considered for a position.

The financial aid counselor or advisor may even be aware of aid that is specially directed to the broadcast industry or for women and minorities. Many grants and scholarships are on a first come, first serve basis, so apply as soon as possible. Financial aid is a major concern to most Black women in that many are from low income backgrounds, many are currently employed and providing for a family, and the general expense of education has been getting higher every year. If funding is a problem, you will want to contact the financial aid office at the particular school in which you are enrolling.

As Communications majors are relatively new in college curricula, they tend to be more flexible as far as student choices than more traditional majors. Opportunities for individualization and other innovative study options are often available. The prospective student is well advised to explore all possible options. Be careful in your selection of courses. Work very closely with the head of your Mass Communications or Journalism Department. After you have some basic knowledge of what the television industry is about and where you might fit into it,

you should try to get involved in an internship or training program at a local television station. Internships and training programs are necessary to get some experience under your belt.

One of the problems that most newly graduated students have when applying for a position is lack of experience. Internships help to fill this void and often provide rich educational insights that cannot be gained in the classroom on how skills and knowledge are applied. It is a good idea to call all the stations within your proximity to find out if and when they offer these sorts of programs and to work closely with your academic advisor or department head to coordinate efforts at placing you in the internship most suited to your needs.

We are aware that career opportunities for Black women have always been limited. In the beginning, the Black woman was forced into the job market because of the socioeconomic circumstances that were common to many Black families for years. Historically, the Black woman could always find a job when the Black man could not. So the tradition came about of women as the head of the household, managing budgets, educating their people and setting trends for the future.

Over the past 40 years, many changes have had monumental effects on the life styles of all Americans. Much of this change has been accelerated by the sophisticated forms of mass communications that have been developed during this century. This high level of communications has greatly influenced human relations and effected the way we perceive ourselves as Black women and the way that others see and have seen us. It is surprising how much television, radio and telecommunications have played a role in the development of a breed of new American Black women.

The July 1983 issue of Essence Magazine says that some interesting changes are going on in the Black population of the United States of America. Between

1970 and 1980 the population in the Black community rose from 11.7 million to 26.5 million making up 13.2 percent of the total American population. The article by Beatrice Nivens also stated that Black women, more than any other group, were making significant strides to enter professional positions.

Unfortunately, statistics from the Federal Government of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics in Washington, D.C. say that only 22,000 of the three million five hundred and thirty-three thousand professional people (less than .13 of one percent) in the mass communications industry are Black women. As Black women make up 6.0 percent of the U.S. population, these figures represent a sad commentary on the television industry's efforts to achieve equal opportunity.

In recent years the bright, attractive, aggressive achiever has been the focus for the image of the new breed of Black women. This fact is, however, that statistically a less fortunate group of Black women seems to be the norm. Poor Black women and children seem to remain at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale in terms of education and finances. Black women who find a job don't mind working despite the stereotype of Blacks as lazy people. The problem is finding a job, as it is for most unemployed Americans today. It is especially hard to find a job if your field of interest is mass communications. If you are a Black woman trying to break into the communications industry, it is even harder.

There are still too many misnomers about the glamour of the field of mass communications. Misunderstanding still exists about the supposed ease of the Black woman in getting into the industry, being promoted and achieving upward mobility.

After the Civil Rights Movement of the sixties and the Equal Opportunity Act of 1963, There was a new awareness of all Black people of more possibilities for education, training and careers in new fields of interest. In the wake of the Civil Rights Movement came the Women's Movement bringing with it the

awakening that women were real people who needed and deserved to have the same opportunities and rights as their male counterparts.

Among women of color, there was some initial confusion about how women's rights would affect them or even if it would affect them at all. After all, the only motivating factor for most Black women until the sixties was survival. These women tended to have no elaborate career goals and no specific plans except making ends meet. Basically this was because Black women didn't want to face the inevitable discouragement caused by the obstacles that obviously stood in their way. Suddenly the Civil Rights and Women's Movements suggested there was a change that there might be new horizons for them.

Like other industries, the communications industry found that the government and the law would not permit them to continue to discriminate in their employment practices. The Federal Communications Commission set up guidelines that said that not only were more minorities and women to be hired, but that there was an obvious need for equal representation of women and minorities in decision making positions. In many instances the Black woman found herself thrown into the world of management with no experience and little training. This was unfortunate in some respects, for there were inevitable mistakes made by these first novices and these were used as an example of what all Blacks or female workers would achieve in similar positions.

We are still in the midst of a critical period of transition for Black women in fields like mass communications and journalism. Doors are beginning to open that were closed before. Now there are training programs and internships available that were unthinkable before. Black women can now in greater numbers hope to at least get their feet in the door. In greater numbers, they are finding it possible to get an entry level position and move to middle management and professional positions. But as newcomers to the media industry with its good ol' boy system

designed by White men for White men, they have few new role models to emulate. Many find it hard to network into the White male mainstream where much of the necessary survival skills and learning take place.

When asked why there are so few Black women listed in the top four categories of employment reports, broadcast management often cite lack of education and limited opportunities for Black women as a probable cause for what appears to be their inability to recruit qualified candidates. In reality, however, there are, says Joan M. Crawford, Employment Specialist, St. Louis Area Urban League, an estimated thousands of highly qualified Black women graduated from colleges every year with degrees in Mass Communications, Journalism and related fields. Because so many of these women are not placed in positions that give them opportunity to develop their skills to the highest potential, there are a limited number of Black women in decision making roles. What results is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because Black women are not given key decision-making roles, it is then perceived that they are incapable of them and that White men are in general more qualified for upper management positions. In effect, the White males already in power reinforce an outworn stereotype and protect what they have considered for years their own exclusive domain.

If you were to look at the organizational charts of most companies in the mass communications business, you would find that there appear to be many women in line for middle and upper management positions. There are also many women who think they are in line for middle and upper management positions who are caught in a dead-end kind of position and don't realize it. A great many women in both positions are Black females. The important thing for Black women is to find out where they stand in the overall company picture and projection. Black women professionals and managers need to know how much power they have and, most of all, how to use the power to achieve the most positive effect. Sadly,



most Black women in positions of power seem to have the least control over the rewards that come with power: pay raises, promotions, etc. What must ultimately change is the structure of established management and how that management perceives Black women. Black women themselves must begin to re-think and evaluate their own self-image and talents. A major part of self-image for anyone is determined by the judgments of one's behavior and appearance by the others they come in contact with. This can be a major problem for the Black woman in the highly visible world of mass communications where judgments are often clouded by stereotypes about both Blacks and women in the work place.

The only conclusion is that the Black woman, more than any other manager or professional, must strive to be twice as good as the rest. For the Black woman it becomes a constant struggle for harmony between self concept and pressure of a world that she frequently does not understand.

I believe that any woman who chooses television as a profession and then chooses to, as they say, "have it all" (a family, a career, a home and, hopefully, some form of recreation or social life), is entering a world full of risk, variety and discovery.

In an article in Working Woman, February, 1983, entitled "Happiness is a Good Job", by Baruch, Rosalind and Rivers, the authors develop the concept of women becoming more complete individuals by the stimulation of developing all aspects of their personalities. Such development, they observe, "leads in our culture to the sources of what we call a sense of mastery — feeling important and worthwhile . . . a sense of 'pleasure' . . . finding life enjoyable."

"Mastery" includes, according to the article, a sense of self-esteem, a sense of control over your life, and low levels of anxiety and depression. Mastery is closely related to the "doing" side of life, to work and activity.

"Pleasure" is the other dimension. It is composed of happiness, satisfaction, and optimism and is tied closely to the feeling side of life. Those who try to have it all must realize that they are committing themselves to what could be considered a life-long, high-powered 60 hour a week career at the minimum. In an industry like mass communications, you can believe that if you are going to be successful in the professional, family, and social dimensions of your life, you will frequently put in a 70 or 80 hour work week.

You, I am sure, are beginning to ask yourself is it worth trying as a Black woman in this industry to "have it all;" I answer that question with a yes. I believe that there could not be a more fulfilling and challenging industry in the world to try and master. As for feeling worthwhile, Black women even more so than White women, have been made to feel worthless by society for many years. But that means that every step toward success that is accomplished becomes that much more rewarding and fulfilling.

The communications industry has been far from pioneers as equal opportunity employers, nor have they been progressive in their portrayals of Blacks, be they men or women. In a way, television programming has projected the very stereotypes that stand behind their hiring practices. For the past 30 years, Blacks have been portrayed in the media frequently in what could be considered less than fully equal or even fully human roles, as can be seen in many early motion pictures, cartoons and even in the modern day sit-coms.

Many Black leaders are extremely upset with the image of Black people in television in general. One Black Chicago Congressman, Charles Hayes, said that Black men have moved from chauffeurs and servants to the "gofer" and pilot to Magnum P.I.

In October, 1983, Jesse Jackson, along with other Black leaders, attended a congressional hearing concerning the image of Blacks in television. They express

their opinion that minorities, in general, seem to appear in a negative light. Most minorities in regular programming, they observed, appear as gangsters, pimps, prostitutes, nudists and maids.

From personal observations, I would say Black children seem to be coming on the scene in more positive roles in popular sit-coms like "Different Strokes" and "Webster." These shows have little to do with the realities of Black life, however, as the children are adopted members of wealthy white families. Their Blackness is homogenized. The cultural richness that is part of the family experience of many Blacks is, as always, misrepresented or ignored.

More recently, the Bill Cosby Show has broken new ground in portraying the Black Family in a more positive and less stereotyped roles. This is a hopeful sign that television may finally be coming around to address the realities of the 1980's. As Marcy Coksi, a writer/producer for the Cosby Show said, "Bill Cosby has found a way to show us all that we're all in this thing together."

Still, at the Urban League Annual Dinner meeting held here in St. Louis on April 9, 1984, Tony Brown, producer/host of the nationally acclaimed television program "Tony Brown's Journal," made it very clear that as a Black journalist he had some major concerns about the image of Blacks in television. His concerns were not how others perceived Blacks, but the psychological impact these programs have on how Blacks see themselves. Shows like "Different Strokes" and "Webster" that present the parents as White and the children as Black make it appear that Black people are incapable of caring for their own children. Black people are only capable of conceiving children, to be raised by nice, good, understanding and stable White folks.

Brown went on to talk about shows like "Good Times." He referred to the program as "Bad Times" because the show was really based on Black people who were experiencing Bad Times. These bad times were the result of Black people

trying to live with Black people, and everyone knows that Black people lie, cheat and steal from each other and it appears that in every episode that's what they did. But then, says Brown, Black folks moved up to "The Jeffersons." In "The Jeffersons," the father and head of the household was a short bigot with a wife that is bigger than him physically. The Black man was again represented as being weak, insecure, or less than the typical White man in the same situation.

All in all, Mr. Brown's speech was directed at the psychological brain-washing that he believes many television programs have projected through the years.

Not only is the stereotyped image of Blacks projected by TV in need of overhauling in light of social realities, but career opportunities for Black women and other minorities should be opening up still more in response to the realities of the 80's. Just as the success of the Cosby Show is a positive sign in the programming area, so are there comparable positive signs in areas of Black employment.

For instance, the need for new thinking in the direction of administration and production as a career for Black women and other minorities is apparent and is being acknowledged by media executives. For instance, on October 10, 1983, on CNN television, Jay Rodriguez, Vice President of NBC networks said that NBC was going out for the urban market, and that because of the need to attract the urban viewer, a population group dominated by Blacks, there would be more on-the-air roles for Black journalists, and behind the scene jobs for Blacks with a variety of management, technical and other skills. In that same newscast, the need for such opportunities for Blacks was highlighted as CNN reported that Sidney Poitier, world acclaimed Black actor, said, "It is obvious that opportunities for Blacks are shrinking in television." Poitier noted that the only way more opportunities for Black actors could result would be to get more Blacks behind the

camera in the roles of production and administration. In their own way, Rodriguez as media spokesman, and Poitier as media critic, are singing the same tune.

Black viewers' influence in important urban markets suggest that the 80's and beyond will see more opportunities for Blacks in all areas of the television business. The prospects for college-age Blacks are better than ever.

What could be more fulfilling, as a Black woman, than becoming a role model for thousands of little Black girls by presenting an image as an authoritative television anchor and/or reporter like Felicia Jeeter of CBS? Could there even be anything more challenging than striving for a position as an executive producer or top administrator, so that as a Black woman you can affect how Black womanhood is perceived by developing and presenting television programming that will show Black women in a more honest and positive light. If you talk to the young professional women who have already started developing these kinds of careers in the television industry, you can't help but get caught up in the excitement and the challenge. Long, hard work is a requirement, but for many it is self-renewing and energizing. A 30 year old Black woman who just made a career swing from social work to television, put it into the following words, "Most folks who are into dream chasing and empire building are into it 18 hours a day, everyday, anyway."

One of the problems in this lifestyle is learning to be prepared for anything. In talking with Black and White professional women in the field of mass communications, I found that the Blacks had a tendency to be less ambivalent about combining their careers with roles as wives and mothers. The Black women seem to have fewer self-doubts. Like the White women, they were aware of the prejudice against them, but unlike their counterparts, seemed less likely to accept it. It appears to me that fighting two prejudices rather than one has been a

positive motivator in these women's careers. Perhaps they have resisted ingrained biases more than White women because of the lack of options. The Black women could not easily retire into the traditional, dependent White middle class housewife role at the heights of their careers as have many professional White women with whom I have worked. It is perceived by some that Black women have an advantage over Black men as professionals in the media. It appears to be easier for Black women than Black men to penetrate the professional circle (known by some as the good ol' boy system) because they, unlike Black men, were not considered as much of a threat to the White male establishment. The most universal trait of the women that I interviewed was that their families, mentor, or a life-long friend had supported their ambitions from childhood. In most instances, the Black women received from their families considerable moral and when possible, financial support, just as a typical White male would receive from an upward striving family. Unlike many White females, the Black women for the most part never considered turning back once they started down the road to a career. In many instances, they feel they had no choice but to continue toward their goals.

Most of the Black women I talked to had, contrary to much opinion, excellent credentials for their positions. Unlike many White men in similar positions in the television industry, all of the Black women had at least a four year degree of some kind, most in mass communication or journalism.

Though these women tended to be highly ambitious achievers, their concerns were not totally self-centered. Despite their privileged educational credentials, background, and sometimes a middle class upbringing, all of the Black women I interviewed expressed a sense of duty to the low income Black community. Many of the women said that they had spent time through the Black Journalist Association, Jeff Vander-Lou or other organizations creating opportunities for low

income Black youths to learn more about the field of mass communications. One woman professional who is single and had recently adopted a child, stated that she would like to continue her volunteer work but found it difficult since she was now a single working mother in a very demanding profession. The fact that she is still struggling to maintain her volunteer community commitment typifies how seriously many of the women I talked to take such work.

Most of the Black women were very much aware of the emphasis that has previously been placed on hiring "qualified" Black women in professional and executive positions. The women felt that in many instances they were hired because of the strenuous moves made by the FCC to make sure that television and radio complied with the full employment act. Most of this activity took place during the Carter/Mondale administration when a strong Civil Rights Commission led to Federal agencies actively seeking compliance with civil rights statutes. They spoke of their positions with an air of irony. As highly qualified candidates for their positions they were frequently given an opportunity just because the company needed them to meet its quota of women and Blacks. Many of these women were hired in the area of Public Affairs or Community Relations. These women, however, believed that they deserved the positions and whatever benefits a change in social awareness had brought them. They were very much aware of FCC regulations and expressed concern about the deregulation of radio and television broadcast and its effect on current employment practices. More concern was recently expressed by an interviewee about the philosophy of President Reagan's new Civil Rights Commission and their opposition to quotas. In fact, one woman who is a television producer and public relations director said that without government support the future of Black women could be extremely bleak.

All of these women have a need to defy the odds. They are magnificent gamblers in a game of chance. There is a uniqueness about these women that transcends race and sex. The feeling of being special that they often seem to radiate becomes important in explaining the career success of all the women I interviewed. I think that this feeling (which may be partially innate and partially a result of their accomplishments) has given them a sense of self-confidence, developing egos strong enough to withstand the corrosive effects of discrimination.

My personal experience in the field of mass communications has been what I would consider a positive venture. My interest in television started at the age of six months and has been one of my main past-times since in one way or another. When I started in my position at KTVI five years ago, one particular manager said to me, "You're too aggressive . . . don't you realize how pushy you appear to others." I'm glad I didn't let him "impact on" my self-image or become too much of an influence on my style. As I have matured more in the business, I have come to realize that being "pushy" in the eyes of that particular manager and others following his school of thought meant simply any woman (especially a Black woman) who refused to be pushed around. In the television business you have to be aggressive to succeed and survive.

If you want to be successful, most of all you must be persistent! When I applied for a position at KTVI for the first time I was working in community relations for a poverty program. That was 1976. I was interviewed, but no position was available. Later in 1977 I was writing for the Board of Education and free lancing. Again I had an unsuccessful interview with KTVI, and tried for jobs at other stations without any luck. Again, in 1979 KTVI interviewed me; this time I was told that the company was impressed and would call if and when a position was available. In early 1980 I was called for an interview and later hired in my



present position as Director of Minority and Women's Affairs.

One young Black woman who is currently an audio engineer at KTVI started applying three years ago. Another woman who is now a floor director for many of our Public Affairs Programs has been a persistent applicant for the past three years as well.

The air of self-confidence that most successful Black professional women convey to those who come in contact with them stems, I am sure, initially from their educational background. Going to college is often a more special event in the Black community than the white and those who graduate often have a greater degree of sense of achievement of self-worth than their White counterparts; this seems to be especially true of Black women in the communications industry with so many obstacles to overcome. As she overcomes each challenge on the way to success in her career goals, her feeling of being special and self-confident are likely to be reinforced. It is only when she loses this sense of being special, that the aggressiveness necessary for survival in the industry seems to fade away.

Not long ago the company I'm currently working for held sensitivity sessions for top management. We were shown video tapes of various individuals of different races, who dressed differently, spoke differently and varied in age and background, in a job interview situation. A Black female who dressed suitably and expressed an air of confidence was selected by 100% of all the managers as who they would consider hiring in a peer position. One of the low scores went to a minority woman who the group felt was not aggressive enough to make it in the television business. During the conversation that followed, one of our corporate vice-presidents stated that he looks for a certain amount of aggressiveness in the women he interviews. Without a reasonably aggressive personality, odds for survival and longevity in this business are very slim, he stated.

Most White middle-class families teach their sons to aim high, traditionally telling their daughters to aim towards making a good marriage. Boys go to college to get an education and become successful. Girls go to college to find an educated boy, marry him and make him successful. Though these are stereotyped images and parental attitudes towards White college-aged women may be changing, White women have been traditionally, and still are to a certain extent, less career oriented than Blacks.

Every Black woman I interviewed who is successful in the television industry said that she attended college to gain specialized training. Coincidentally, I found that about three-fourths of the women I talked with had never been married or had been married and now are divorcees. I believe that most of these women had again been motivated by the lack of the guarantee that Prince Charming would arrive equipped with a good profession and a suburban home. Most of these women had to prepare themselves to directly adapt to the fact that the American Dream could possibly fall through.

One Black television producer put it this way, "In today's society, in America at least, women are expected to marry men of equal, if not superior, educational attainment. A Black professional woman has little chance to find an equal partner, for there just aren't enough Black professional men to go around." Another one of the women I talked to stated, "Even if you do find a man you often find yourselves in competition. For some reason a lot of Black men feel threatened by young ambitious, competent Black professional women."

According to Paulette Norvel, Assistant National Director of the now defunct Minority Women Employment Program: "Like white women, minority women who have the option of working or not are caught in the bind of whether to satisfy their own career ambitions or to support their husband's career goals by staying home. But with Black women, there is an added factor: if we choose to

help ourselves first, it is often interpreted by some people as putting the cause of Black people in a secondary place." Black women hope their marriages will last, but they face the fact that the divorce statistics are higher for Blacks and the remarriage rate lower. Although the divorce rate for Black professionals is lowest of any other job category, for Black women workers it is still higher than their White counterparts. The divorce rate can, however, be a positive factor by making our dedication to career stronger than our White cohorts.

We as Black women interested in the television industry must obviously prepare ourselves to compete within the highly aggressive and cut-throat field of mass communications. The information on the following pages will add to the ability of the average Black female communications specialist to achieve and maintain a position in the television industry.

## WHERE TO GO FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup>

As I said in the introduction, financial aid is a very important concern to Black women students. With the cuts the Reagan administration has made, some of the past resources for women and minorities at the mid-income level have dried up, making it just as difficult for these students as their lower income sisters to find financial assistance. It is very important for any student seeking a degree or certification to find expert counseling in the area of financial assistance.

Make certain that you explore all avenues of financial assistance that are available at the institution to which you apply. Most schools have allocated money for that exact purpose. Do not hesitate to examine additional sources of financial aid other than those which are indicated on the institution's aid application. For example, most schools have a Financial Aid office, a Veterans' Affairs Office, and a Development Office. Each is a possible source of additional assistance. Do not forget to contact other campus-based offices such as program chairmen, campus personnel, placement, and cooperative work-study. While the advice you obtain could be invaluable, you may even be able to gain employment on or off campus.

It is wise to seek financial assistance from sources other than the institution itself. Foundations, federal programs, state programs, local programs, associations, and private agencies comprise such likely sources. The type of assistance available could vary from outright fellowships or grants, to student loans which carry low interest or none at all upon repayment.

Wading through the voluminous range of these private and public resources can be painstaking and time-consuming. The astute researcher however, will use campus-based professionals for help whenever possible.

There are many reasons why you should not wait until the last minute to begin the aid-seeking process. Probably the most important one is that there will be many other concerns that you will have to address even after aid is received. Taking care of all the requirements for both admission and financial aid as early as possible should help to relieve some of your anxiety. If you have completed these processes before your college or university breaks for Christmas, you should be right on schedule.

## A SUMMARY OF TELEVISION POSITIONS<sup>2</sup>

Nearly one-half of all employees in the broadcasting industry hold professional or technical jobs, such as announcers, anchor and news persons, writers, or broadcast technicians. Clerical and sales workers make up about one-fourth and managerial personnel, an additional one-fourth. Other employees include craft workers such as electricians and carpenters, operators, service workers and laborers.

### Programming Department

Staff members in the programming department produce daily and weekly program service such as sound effects and lighting. From time to time, freelance performers, writers, singers and other entertainers are hired for specific broadcasts, for a series of broadcasts, or for special assignments. The size of the programming departments depends on the extent to which the station's broadcasts are live, recorded or received from a network. In a large station the program staff may consist of a large number of people in a wide variety of specialized jobs.

Program directors are responsible for the overall program schedules of large stations. Continuity directors are responsible for the writing and editing of scripts. They may be assisted by continuity writers. Radio and television directors plan and supervise individual programs or series of programs. They coordinate the shows, select artists and studio personnel, schedule and conduct rehearsals, and direct on-the-air shows. They may be assisted by associate directors or program assistants. Public service directors plan, schedule and coordinate programs in the fields such as education, religion, and civic and government affairs. In large stations, directors may work under the supervision of a producer who selects scripts, controls finances, and handles other production problems. Announcers introduce programs, guests and musical selections and

deliver most of the live commercial messages. They may also do the research and writing for a program. News directors plan and supervise all news and special events coverage. News reporters gather and analyze information about newsworthy events for broadcast. News writers select locations and setting and coordinate the setting up of scenery and props to convey the desired visual impressions. They are assisted by set decorators, and scenic arts supervisors. Property handlers set up props and do other chores. Makeup artists prepare personnel for broadcasts by applying cosmetics. Sound effects technicians operate special equipment to simulate sounds. Field editors edit and prepare all film and video tape for on-the-air presentation. Film or tape librarians catalog and maintain files and film and video tapes.

### **Engineering Department**

Most stations employ chief engineers who are responsible for all engineering matters, including supervision of technicians. Networks employ a few electrical-design engineers to design and develop new electronic apparatus to meet special needs. Broadcast technicians control the operation of the transmitter, and set up, operate and maintain equipment in the studio and on location. They may also serve as specialized transmitter, maintenance, audio control, video control, lighting, field or recording technicians.

### **Sales Department**

Account executives sell advertising time to sponsors, advertising agencies and other buyers. Those working in the cable television industry contact homeowners, apartment managers, and others to sell community television antennas and cable service.

### **General Administration**

Station managers coordinate the activities of the programming, engineering, and sales departments. The business staff may include business managers, accountants, lawyers, personnel workers, public relations workers and others. They are assisted by office workers such as secretaries, bookkeepers and clerks.



## CAREERS IN CABLE TELEVISION

In the August edition of Essence Magazine, 1983, an article by Beatryce Nivens cites examples of what might be considered "HOT CAREERS IN THE 80's." Nivens explains with this article what she considers promising industries with promising jobs. One of the industries she suggests that Black women become more interested in is cable television. I know that most of you have read and heard a lot about cable television. Some of the things you have heard may not be completely up to date. To help you get a better perspective of cable television as a possible source of employment, here is a short explanation of the cable industry as I understand it.

At one time if you lived in a valley it was almost impossible to get a television signal because the surrounding hills blocked the signals. Someone got the idea to hookup an antenna to the homes located in the valley with a cable. With the connection of the cable, the homes were able to pick up the signal and there it was, a television picture.

People who lived in big cities with tall buildings had still another problem. The television signals would often bounce from building to building before they got to the television set, causing them to receive more than one picture at a time. Cable worked to connect the homes more directly, ending these reflections and giving the city people a better picture.

Televisions located in rural areas can now give their viewers more diverse programming with a cable originating from urban areas. This was the beginning of basic cable programming.

Now we have what is called pay cable with programs such as Showtime, Cinemax and Home Box Office (HBO). These pay stations are subscribed by a very large portion of cable-originated audiences; they are special non-commercial, non-advertising programs.

Most cities have many cable systems; each is separate covering a very own specific area. Cable uses the term "subscribers" which are the homes that agree to pay to receive the programming. A cable subscriber subscribes to only one cable system, the one covering where he lives. When cable systems in the same city interconnect, programming and advertising on one system may be seen by people watching another system. A local television sales executive told me that the chairman of RCA predicted that by 1990 network television revenue would hit \$13 billion and that cable revenue would be at least \$28 billion dollars.

In a recent speech, Plura Marshall, President of the National Black Media Coalition, stated that cable television needs more Blacks in management and production. He went further, proposing that Blacks should consider working in group partnerships to purchase cable. He says that more Blacks need to be employed by the existing white owned cable systems. "Black people must realize that the employment situation and the image problems that Black people have with cable will not change until Black people stop purchasing so much cable programming." Marshall says one of four cable subscribers is Black and his rationale is that more employment representation should be understood as part of that kind of economic support.

A. Bruce Williams, a Black manager in Sales, Advertising and Production, Group W. Cable, says that he believes that there are great opportunities for Blacks in cable television. He believes that cable television will provide more jobs for the 20-25,000 people graduated from colleges with broadcasting and communication degrees each year and that Blacks will get their representative share. In light of the potential employment opportunities cable holds for Blacks, the prospective media professional should familiarize herself with the basic element of this industry. The key terms appear on the following pages.

## CABLE TV TERMS<sup>3</sup>

### Basic Cable

The main service of cable television consisting of improved reception and increased availability of retransmitted local and distant broadcast signals, non-pay satellite signals, and alphanumeric information channels. Given to subscribers for a minimum monthly fee.

### Pay Cable

A premium program service that cable subscribers may purchase in addition to the basic service. Offers movies, sports, minidocumentaries, and special-interest programming usually unavailable on commercial television.

### Tier

Single or multiple channels offered over and above basic cable service. May include additional premium services, specialized services and distant signals for which extra charges are made.

### Homes Passed

The number of homes having cable readily available because the feeder lines are already in place.

### Churn

The constant turnover of subscribers due to new customers and disconnects.

### Superstation

"The Superstation" refers to WTBS-17 in Atlanta and is a term that has been copyrighted by the independent station. It transmits television signals to cable systems throughout the U.S. via satellite and is owned by Turner Broadcast Systems. Other independent stations' show signals are transmitted to cable systems via satellite are WOR-New York, WGN-Chicago, and KTVU-San Francisco/Oakland.

### Earth Station

Also called a "dish". Consists of disc antenna and receiving equipment directed toward a fixed orbit satellite. Varying in size from 4.5 to 10 meters in diameter, earth stations enable over 2,200 cable systems to receive and provide their subscribers with viable non-broadcast programming such as HBO, Showtime, NSG, ESPN. Earth stations are now being marketed to large ranches in hard-to-reach cable areas and are already in the home consumer market.

### **Cable System**

A communications medium in which television signals are transmitted by wire to the TV receivers of subscribers, who normally pay a monthly fee for the service. The signals can be picked up directly from a television camera in a local studio or taken off the air from local TV stations; they can also come from distant locations via landlines, microwave or communications satellites.

### **Interconnect**

Two or more cable systems joining together to create a larger subscriber base for advertising sales purposes. The three largest interconnects are Gill Cable (San Jose), San Diego (Mission Cable plus two others), and Buffalo Cable.

### **MSO**

Multiple System Operator. Designates any company having more than one franchise. Top 25 MSO's have 28% of all systems, 55% of all subscribers.

After considering possible career opportunities and developing basic skills, the prospective job candidate is ready to enter the professional world. When making application for any position (including internships and training programs), it will be necessary to produce a resume. When you work on a resume, remember that your resume should reflect an interest in the particular area in which you are applying. A resume must be a list of credits and represent you as an achiever in your field of interest, be they achievements in work experience or in education.

Be aware of what the particular company, that owns and operates the station, is looking for and design your resume accordingly. In the field of television, your resume should indeed reflect an active interest in broadcasting. If you are interested in production, your resume should reflect your talents in that area. If you are interested in administration, your resume should reflect your administrative skills. This administrative experience need not be all in the area of mass communications. However, some experience in the area of communications is necessary, be it educational or acquired experience.

If you are interested in becoming a reporter or anchor person, you will need to supplement your resume with an audition tape (must be 3/4" video) and some writing samples.

The following is a list of questions to ask yourself as you take inventory for your resume:

### Education

1. What high school did you attend (name and address)?  
Dates of attendance?
2. What were your best subjects in school?
3. Which subjects didn't you like in high school?
4. Did you win any awards, scholarships, or honors in high school?
5. What extracurricular activities were you involved in during high school?
6. What were your top three achievements in high school?
7. What community or civic activities were you involved in during high school?
8. Is there anything special about your high school years?
9. What vocational or trade school did you attend (name and address)? Dates of attendance?
10. What subjects did you take in vocational or trade school?  
Which did you like best? Which did you like least?

11. What certificate or diploma did you receive in vocational or trade school?
12. What was your date of graduation?
13. What college did you attend (name and address)?  
Dates of attendance?
14. What was your major/minor?
15. Look at your transcript. Are there any subject areas in which you have 20 or more credits that can be used as a minor or to show proficiency in the area?
16. What were your college extracurricular activities?
17. What were your top three achievements in college?
18. Is there anything special about your college years that you would like to note?
19. What graduate school did you attend (name and address)?  
Dates of attendance? Degree?
20. Did you receive any special training?

### **Major Work Experience**

1. List all your employers (name, address, type of organization, date of employment, titles).
2. List all summer jobs, unpaid or volunteer work, internships, and part-time work.
3. Next to each position, list job duties and skills.
4. Think of five things that you did beyond each job description.
5. Think of three things that you did on each job which makes you proud.
6. What were the immediate results of the tasks you did on the job? What were the long-term results?
7. What are your strengths on the job? Your weakness?
8. What other job or careers will your skills transfer to?

### **Professional Associations, Groups, Clubs**

1. List the associations, groups, and clubs to which you belong.
2. Are any of them relevant to the job you are seeking?

After you have answered these questions, make a list of the talents, skills, education and experience you feel directly related to your particular area of interest. If you find that your resume is too short, fill in with the experiences that you feel most positive about. Keep in mind that these must still remain consistent with your goals and the general resume structure.

Do not leave any large time lags on your resume that you cannot explain. Remember, you are trying to present yourself as an achiever and a consistent profile is important to that image.

On the following five pages you will find examples of resumes and applications in three different areas of the television industry; production, journalism and management. You will find that according to your career goals and ambitions there are particular departments in which you may want to apply.

An aspiring would-be producer/writer could start working for the promotions department, in an entry-level position in the news room or writing and producing public affairs shows.

A young woman interested in becoming a general assignment reporter might want to apply as an assistant producer/director in the news room, or an assistant editor/writer position.

If your particular interest is in administration, there is anything from programming, sales, accounting or general administrative positions to select from.

One of the producers I talked with who has in the past five years had opportunity to make hiring decisions for positions such as assistant producers, interns and photographers said that she always asks for a resume. The resume is, in fact, a tool she uses for her preliminary selection. Only after reviewing each resume does she set up initial interviews.

Frequently, in my current position, I am asked to select interns and make preliminary decisions on possible job candidates. Whenever I talk to prospective

employees the first thing I ask for is a resume. I have found when forwarding general applications the successful candidates are usually those who have presented genuinely professional looking resumes. A good resume often provides a preliminary indication of a person's organizational and communications skills as well as a sense of the applicant's fitting the needs of the job well.

Consider the four fictitious resumes that I have used as examples on the following pages.



Example #1, is an application for internship. It is good to show that you have been active as a student with the radio or television station on campus (if the school has one). This experience gives you an extra edge as it suggests that you are ready to step in and be an asset to the station. If the internship you are applying for is not your first, don't be afraid to say so.

**RENEE CARSON**

1924 Webster Street  
Webster Groves, Missouri

Birth: May 21, 1962  
Health: Excellent

(314) 972-1099 - Business  
(314) 864-9811 - Residence

**CAREER GOAL:** An internship at a television station where I can gain more skills and general knowledge of television broadcasting.

**EDUCATION:** Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville  
B.A. Mass Communications - May 1985

**EXPERIENCE:** WRTU Channel 113, Edwardsville, Illinois  
Assistant Director, 1982 - Present

Floor directing various local programs.

JUI Cable Television, Edwardsville, Illinois  
Camera Person, January 15, - May 30, 1983

Internship; worked camera equipment.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:** Scholarship - Black Women in Media, 1983 - 1984.

Example #2, is an application for entry level position in broadcast journalism. This applicant stands a good chance of being hired. She has a four year journalism degree from an excellent journalism school. The applicant shows that she is industrious because she worked part-time in college. She has some basic knowledge of writing and actual television experience from her work in radio, cable and her college internship. The leadership qualities suggested by her presidency of the Women in Television Chapter conveys that she has good character and gets on well with others.

## MICHELLE JONES

4211 Martin Luther King Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63115

Birth: January 17, 1949  
Health: Excellent

(314) 521-6059  
(314) 542-5402

### CAREER GOAL:

An entry level position in broadcast journalism that will give me an opportunity to utilize my writing and production skills and develop new ones.

### EDUCATION:

University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri  
B.A. - Journalism School, May 1978

### EXPERIENCE:

E.D. Add Agency, Columbia, Missouri  
Part-time Copywriter, 1975 - 1979

Wrote copy for paint ads for agency clients.

KTPO Hot Rock Radio, Columbia, Missouri  
News Announcer, 1975 - 1978

Wrote and announced daily news reports.

KCYU-TV, Kansas City, Missouri  
Internship, May - September, 1977

General Assignment, Newsroom.

A.T.Y. Cable Company, St. Andrew, Missouri  
News Director/Assignment Editor, 1978 - Present

Responsible for the production of daily cable news program for small cable company.

### ACHIEVEMENTS:

President, Local Chapter in Television, 1982 - Present.  
Voted St. Andrew Woman of the Year.

Example #3 is also a good candidate. She has a degree from an excellent mass communications program. She has the necessary experience and her achievements show that other people think she has great possibilities as a producer.

**JANICE KINGLEN**

406 Kingsbury Place  
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Birth: July 18, 1960  
Health: Excellent

(314) 862-2842 - Business  
(314) 361-8275 - Residence

**CAREER GOAL:** Entry level position in writing in production, Public Affairs or News.

**EDUCATION:** Lindenwood College, St. Charles, Missouri  
B.A. - Mass Communications, May, 1982

**EXPERIENCE:** Community - Help Production Company, St. Louis, Missouri  
Producer, 1981 - 1982

Worked and produced Public Service Announcements for local community organizations.

Maritz Motivation Company, Festus, Missouri  
Producer, 1981 - Present.

Produced video and slide presentation for company projects in the development of motivational programs for business and organizations.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:** Scholarship recipient of Minority Journalist Association, Award - Most Promising News Producer, Women in Production.

Samples and references to be provided upon request.

Example #4, Broadcast Management: this applicant is a good candidate based on her scholastic background alone. She has educational credentials in both mass communications and business. She has work experience in both media and management. She appears to have a basic idea of what the business is like from all aspects of her qualifications.

## RHONDA EVANS

4215-A Maryland Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri 63112

Birth: June 17, 1952  
Health: Excellent

(314) 526-6765 - Business  
(314) 526-5582 - Residence

**CAREER GOAL:** A management position in broadcasting that will utilize my education, talents and problems solving skills.

**EDUCATION:** Graduate School of Business Administration  
Metropolitan College, St. Louis University  
June, 1980 - Degree: MBA  
  
Undergraduate: University of California  
May, 1976 - Degree: BA Mass Communications

**EXPERIENCE:** Assistant Director Community Relations  
WKRK Radio Station, 1981 - Present

Helped to coordinate station Community Relations Department. Kept records of station expenses in the area of community relations. Responsible for the implementation and supervision of various community projects and other community oriented services.

Bigmyer Department Store, Newark, New Jersey  
Manager Salesperson, 1976 - 1979

Responsibilities included supervision of 15 sales-people sales report evaluation, stock accountability, markdowns, transfers, RTU's.

**ACHIEVEMENTS:** Published articles in reference to cable television and the history of radio and television broadcast.

Certificate of Leadership: From Leadership Training Seminar held by Marshall College, New York, New York - 1978

**REFERENCES:** To be provided upon request.



Of course all four candidates are imaginary, but based on my experience in referring applications in all of these areas I believe that these are good examples of what it takes to put your best foot forward and get a prospective employer interested. Note that all four sample resumes are brief (one page), comprehensive, focused and relevant to the needs of the particular job.

## DRESSING THE ROLE

If the resume is the first impression that you can get you in the door, once in the door, how you look and dress can be a decisive factor.

What does the well-dressed Black female television executive wear? Contrary to popular stereotypes, it is not necessary to dress like a man to be successful in the world of big business. In The Success Book For Black Women,<sup>4</sup> Naomi Simms says the following about how career women dress for work: "I do not believe that our chances for success increase in proportion to how man-like our dress code becomes. Menswear manufacturers, facing a slump, discovered a gold mine in the female would-be corporate officer market. What a gross lack of confidence! Why should we have to approximate what a man wears."

Most of the high-collar, long-skirt executives indicate that they dress that way for authority and to be taken more seriously.

In Mitchell and Burdich's The Extra Edge,<sup>5</sup> the authors write the following about professional style, "Contrary to what you may have been told about the necessity of suits for business women, you can create a completely professional look with a dress. Designers today have created dresses that are authoritative, stylish, comfortable and completely appropriate for the office."

I have always believed in quality as opposed to quantity in fashion. A few pieces of well-made, well designed, quality clothing express more class than a lot of cheap clothing.

Dark, rich colors are more authoritative than colors like pink, yellow or baby blue. Baby doll dresses are definitely out for anyone who wants to convey a serious image in business.

Basically, in television, the dress code of management is about the same as that for the reporters and anchors. More than anything, it is very important for

on-the-air talent to convey an image of authority and class. The difference between the Black women in the office and the Black women on the air is basically not in their wardrobe, but in make-up.

Make-up for on-the-air talents is frequently heavier as the lights and cameras make a difference in your appearance. Quite often production people in television will find it necessary to dress a little more casually than people who work on the air or in the front office. There are times when an assistant producer/director will find herself crawling on the floor or climbing through a prop room with the engineering staff. I believe that a woman in one of these positions should dress accordingly to keep in mind a slight bit of the conservative air of the professional environment in which they work. However, these women must follow the same rules as other potential employees for the job interview.

There may be occasions when the on-the-air talent may have to adjust their dress to the environment or to the appropriate dress for the theme of the story they are conveying. As an example, the reporter covering a tennis match might wear a tennis outfit. Though commonplace in television, costuming like this is best rarely used. Too much can undercut the reporter's image of credibility and seriousness. Less gimmicky use of irregular garb might be an anchor doing a series on a devastating flood wearing boots, raincoat, hat and so on. A reporter doing a story on the St. Louis heatwave might wear a cotton dress or do her stand-up with her jacket removed wearing only a short sleeved blouse and skirt. These are examples of visual reinforcement of a story's content that can be effective given the visual nature of TV as a media.

In the book Games Mother Never Taught You; Corporate Gamesmanship for Women,<sup>6</sup> Betty Lehan Harragan presented some basic rules for rookies in the

corporate world. On these following pages, I cite these six rules from her book and interpret them according to how Black women might apply them directly in the television industry.

1. Know your job duties and perform them well.

As a Black women in the television industry, you will find that you will, more than than others, need to remain on your toes at all times. This is true because as you already know, there are so few Black women in television. Blacks have the kind of visibility that magnifies every mistake, and can result in each misstep being projected into a stereotype. You must constantly remind yourself to maintain a highly professional attitude toward your work. You will be forced to deal with pressures from deadlines, upper management, fellow employees, (those you supervise or work directly with) and of course the general public.

2. Don't let anger or fear drive you to impulsive actions that you may regret.

As an employee in the television industry you may find yourself working in an environment that can occasionally become uncomfortable because of management changes, salary problems, ratings and assorted other pressures. Don't jump "out of the frying pan into the fire." Television positions are often limited; don't quit the job until you have found another. Don't broadcast your station problems to the general public. Most of all be cautious in the handling of your immediate supervisor and those you may have to look to for support or you may find yourself in the cold.

3. Never criticize or challenge your boss at meetings where others are present.

If your immediate supervisor or other upper management have done something to upset you, then you should discuss the problem with them directly. Meet with them privately, if necessary and document your meeting. Often problems can be worked out. If, however, you continue to have problems then you may want to consult your boss's boss.

4. Don't try to do everything or be all things to all people.

Set priorities in your daily tasks and your work in general. Do not be distracted by extraneous input from other people who have no impact on your work whatsoever. Don't get bogged down by station gossip (it is best just not to participate in such things). Remember you can be friendly without baring your entire being. Most of all, remember that you are employed by your company first and foremost to perform a particular function. The performance of this function is what shapes your income.

5. Learn from mistakes and put downs. Figure out better tactics for the next try.

A famous television minister, Robert Schuller, has something to say about this subject. He said in a recent program that he had talked to a psychiatrist who said that there seemed to be a pattern with people who lost their bearings in life; they carried too much excess baggage. One common statement used by many was, "If only I had." It seems the best way to avoid this syndrome is to say to yourself, "Next time I will." Use any racial or sexual prejudices you encounter as motivator rather than a deterrent.

6. Don't disparage any success you achieve; publicize and promote yourself at every opportunity.

When you perform a job to the ultimate, don't be afraid to have it publicized by anyone who will. Remember that because you are a Black woman your company will probably enjoy the benefits of your success as well as you. Your success will probably be of great interest to minority and women's publications. If you have written, directed, produced or lent technical assistance to a video production or news stories that is top flight, go through the necessary channels to get awards for your good work. Don't be shy. Express to management that you believe you need recognition. Another source of positive publicity could come through contacting an appropriate publication to write and print a timely article on you as a professional. Remember, one thing in a visual business like television, the old saying "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" can be directly applied.

Remember, you are an innovator. The reality of the situation is that we as Black women in television broadcasting are pioneers. We are setting the pace for those who follow. We must be resourceful, strong, and positive in our approach to the challenge that lies ahead of us. Most of all, we must hold on to our goals and our dreams in the midst of decreased employment and the lack of decision-making positions available for us. We must learn the rules of the game and the limits we can extend ourselves.

It is important to remember that you must lay your career blocks on a strong foundation of education, experience and quality performance. If you do this you will know from your heart that you are indeed a professional and you can

draw the necessary energy from within. You will need a lot of stamina to survive. You will frequently have to take the initiative. But once you get into the business you will realize that it takes the same persistence to be successful in television as it does to achieve an entry level job in this highly competitive field. The following discussion gives an example of how you might use initiative to create your own success.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

When you can't get a salary raise, perhaps a title raise can give you another bonus. Although an employee's salary and responsibilities are usually the most accurate measure of her worth to the company, an improvement in job title can be of benefit even if it is without simultaneous raise in salary.

Job titles are particularly important for these reasons:

1. An improved title betters the image others have of you - it enhances your credibility.
2. Your job title has a lot to do with your self-esteem. An improved job title can make you feel better about yourself - it may even improve your work productivity, and
3. Improving your job title suggests that you can perhaps handle more than you did with your previous title. It therefore gives you a better chance to establish in the future that you are worth an increase in salary or a higher paying position in the company.

Before you attempt to change your job title, you may want to consider the following:

1. Whether you truly believe your performance merits a title change.
2. How your immediate supervisor or manager will react to the idea of a change?
3. Will upper management feel it is a positive company move?
4. How will the people you work with react?
5. How flexible your company is in reference to job titles?
6. Your ability to handle any new responsibilities that might develop from your new title.

Remember, television people are in the business of creating images. Whether you are a producer, writer, director or an administrator, the image is the



thing. So it must be with your own self-visualization. Your career goals and your self-image go hand in hand.

How successful you are will depend on how much of yourself you are willing to put into your work. As Ed Maddox, Corporate Vice-President For Black Entertainment, a cable network specializing in Black programming, once told me, "When they throw lemons at you, make lemonade."

Because of the limited number of jobs available in the broadcast industry it is extremely important to remember that most people who are employed in the industry agree that a person seeking employment must be in the right place at the right time. In order to be in the right place at the right time you must keep in touch with the pulse of the broadcast market so that you can gain access to employment trends and various broadcast positions that may come available. One very good way to achieve this is by communicating with those who are professionally involved in your field of interest and individuals who have similar career aspirations. The process of stationing one's self in the manner I have just expressed to you is called "networking." The following is a list of examples of organizations that may be helpful to you in achieving the networking process.

**NETWORKING BLACK PROFESSIONALS AND**

**WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS**

A Better Chance  
334 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority  
5211 S. Greenwood Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60615

Black Career Women  
3969 Dogwood Lane  
Cincinnati, Ohio 42513

Black Women Organized for Action  
P.O. Box 150172  
San Francisco, California 94115

Black Professional Women's Network  
c/o Karen Johnson & Associates, Inc.  
515 Madison Avenue, Suite 402  
New York, New York 10022

Chi Eta Phi Sorority  
3029 13th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Coalition of 100 Black Women  
60 East 86th Street  
New York, New York 10028

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
1707 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Iota Phi Lamada Sorority, Inc.  
20 Lewis Place  
St. Louis, Missouri 63113

Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority  
100 Hamburg Turnpike  
Wayne, New Jersey 07470

National Alliance of Black Feminists  
202 South State Street, Suite 1024  
Chicago, Illinois 60604

National Association of Colored  
Women's Clubs  
5808-16th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20011

National Association of Media Women  
157 West 126th Street  
New York, New York 10027

National Association of Black Journalists  
P.O. Box 2039  
Washington, D.C. 20013

National Association of Negro Business  
and Professional Women's Clubs  
1806 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20009

National Council of Negro Women, Inc.  
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

National Coalition of Black Women, Inc.  
356 West 58th Street  
New York, New York 10019

National Hook-up of Black Women  
2021-K Street, Suite 305  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Tau Gamma Delta Sorority, Inc.  
2207 Baker Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21216

The Chums, Inc.  
1452 East Pembroke Avenue  
Hampton, Virginia 23663

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority  
1734 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20007



As I mentioned in the beginning of the handbook, financial aid is a major concern to most Black women in that many are from low income backgrounds, many are currently employed and providing for a family, and the general expense of education is escalating.

Another major hurdle for Black women seems to be overcoming lack of experience. Internships and training programs help to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge and applied skills. The following lists will be a helpful guide to some training programs and scholarships available to minorities and women attempting to make a first start into the industry.

## SCHOLARSHIPS, INTERSHIPS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

### American Association of Advertising Agencies Minority Student Fellowship

Program. Under the direction of the AAAA, approximately 25 minority students will be sponsored to work in advertising agencies for 10 weeks during the summer in New York and Chicago. Any racial minority student who is at least a junior in an undergraduate program, or who is in a graduate program is eligible. Undergraduates are paid \$200 a week. Transportation and housing costs are covered by the AAAA. Applications are available for college placement offices or by contacting John Debreceni, American Association of Advertising Agencies, 666-3rd Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Telephone: 212/682-2500.

### American Press Institute Minority Journalism Educators Fellowships.

A fellowship for college-level journalism educators to attend the API seminar of his or her choice. Fellowship covers tuition, room and board, and travel subsidy to the seminar. For details write Malcolm F. Mallette, American Press Institute, 11690 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

### Association for Education in Journalism/New York University Internship

Program for Minorities. For college students interested in magazine, newspaper or public relations work; involves training program at New York University, and employment in magazine, newspaper or public relations jobs in the New York area. Students receive a minimum weekly salary of \$200 from respective employer. For more information write to Coordinator AEJMC/NYU Summer Intern Program Institute of Afro-American Affairs, 269 Mercer Street, New York, New York 10003. Requests for application materials will not be accepted after December 2, 1985.

### Cox Enterprises Minority Scholarship.

For high school seniors from Atlanta planning to study journalism at Georgia State University or an undergraduate school in Atlanta University Center; scholarship awarded during freshman year

and covers tuition, room, board and books; renewable for up to four years as long as student maintains "B" average; for information contact Ms. Ellen Gilbert, Cox Enterprises Minority Scholarship Program, P.O. Box 4689, Atlanta, Georgia 30302; approximate value for four years \$15,000.

**Chicago Association of Black Journalists Scholarships.** For minority students majoring in print or broadcast journalism and planning a career in journalism; open to any full-time undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in an accredited college or university in the Chicago metropolitan area; for information contact Dr. Lillian S. Bell, Department of Journalism, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois 60015. Telephone: 815/753-1925. Deadline March 31; \$1,000 each.

**Michelle Clark Scholarship.** A \$1,000 scholarship to a minority journalist with one to three years experience in electronic journalism to further his or her education in the field. Apply by March 31 to Ernie Schultz, Secretary, Radio Television News Directors Foundation, 1735 DeSales Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

**Des Moines Register Scholarship.** For minority students who are or will attend either Drake University (\$3,500), University of Iowa (\$2,500) or Iowa State University (\$2,500) and will major in journalism or related field; scholarship is a yearly grant and is renewable for undergraduate study; apply February 15 to Sue Tempero, Employee Relations Director, The Des Moines Register, 715 Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

**Greater Miami Chapter SPJ, SDX offers the Garth Reeves Jr. Memorial Scholarships** (1 or more). For undergraduate and graduate level minority students majoring in journalism; preference is given students majoring in journalism; preference is given students attending a college or university in Miami, amount of scholarship is determined by need; apply by March 1 to Bill Whiting, View Data

**Los Angeles Professional Chapter SPH,SDX offers the Ken Inouye Scholarship.** For junior or above journalism majors attending any Los Angeles County college or university; apply by April 1 to Los Angeles Professional Chapter, SPJ,SDX, c/o Press Club, 600 N. Vermont, Los Angeles, California 90004; \$1,000.

**National Association of Media Women, Inc.** Atlanta offers a scholarship/internship to an undergraduate minority female majoring in mass communications. Applicants must attend a college or university in Georgia. Apply by March 26 to Mrs. Portia Scott Brookings c/o Atlanta Daily World, 145 Auburn Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30335; minimum grant \$250.

**National Association of Black Journalists Internship.** Program for minority journalism students; recipients will serve 10 week reporting internships at newspapers or broadcast stations designated by NABJ and receive salaries of \$350 per week; application deadline December 31; for information contact Mr. Mel Johnson, NABJ, P.O. Box 2089, Washington, D.C. 20013.

**National Association of Black Journalists Scholarship.** Awarded to minority journalism student for undergraduate study at the college of the recipient's choice, apply in late spring; for information contact; Mr. Mel Johnson, NABJ, P.O. Box 2089, Washington, D.C. 20013; \$1,000.

**NBC Fellowship Program for Minorities in Broadcasting.** Fellowships covering tuition and a living stipend to provide aid to minority students seeking a graduate degree in broadcasting, journalism or business administration at a university in a city where NBC owns a television station. Schools included are Cleveland State University, Columbia University, New York; University of Southern California, Los Angeles, University of Chicago; Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois; American University Washington, D.C. and Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. Deadline for application depends on

admissions requirement of particular school. For information contact the admissions office of the particular graduate school.

**Summer Program for Minority Journalists.** An intensive 11-week program of professional training for minority adults with little or no previous professional experience in journalism, but who have an ability to write with a sincere interest in pursuing a career in print media. Successful candidates of this national competition work under daily deadlines for the program's weekly newspaper, Deadline: Post-summer placement guaranteed on one of the sponsoring newspapers throughout the country. For complete information contact; Mr. Robin Azi, Summer Program for Minority Journalist, B28 Northgate Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720. Telephone: 415/642-5962. Application deadline February 15. This program is sponsored by the Institute for Journalism Education (IJE), a non-profit corporation based at the University of California, Berkeley.



## LEARN THE LANGUAGE

These definitions of financial aid terms are provided to make students aware of their rights and responsibilities in applying for and receiving various types of financial assistance:

**ASSISTANTSHIP:** A stipend awarded in return for service to a college. It usually involves a fixed number of hours per week and dictates the amount of classwork to be undertaken.

**FELLOWSHIP:** Any grant to graduate student which enables him/her to further his/her education. Repayment may or may not be required.

**COLLEGE WORK STUDY PROGRAM:** (CWSP) A college/federally sponsored program designed to offer employment to students who qualify for assistance. Jobs are found on or off the campus.

**COOPERATIVE EDUCATION:** A work-study concept whereby the student receives on-the-job training and college credit for at least one academic period. Employment is usually related to the student's chosen field of study.

**PSF AND FAF:** "Parents' Financial Statement" and "Financial Aid Form," two forms; used to report basic family financial information to agencies and colleges. Most colleges require the use of either of these forms for student applying for financial aid.

**GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL FINANCIAL AID SERVICE:** (GAPSFAS) Forms used to report basic student financial information to agencies and graduate and professional schools. Students pursuing post-graduate study will use this form to apply for assistance.

**GRANT:** An outright gift for which no return of service or repayment is required. Grants are normally based on financial need.

**BASIC EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANT:** Pell Grants offered by the federal government to students who qualify based on need, and which may be used at any

**SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY GRANT:** (SEOG) Government-sponsored grants which are awarded to students who have exceptional financial need.

**LOAN:** A sum of money which enables a student to continue his/her education, and for which repayment, usually with interest is eventually required.

**COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LOAN:** Institutionally-monitored aid for which repayment is normally not required until after the student graduates or withdraws from the institution. Interest rates are usually very low if included, and student may repay over an extended period of time.

**NATIONAL DIRECT STUDENT LOAN:** (NDSL) Institutionally-administered federal loans, repayable after graduation (or withdrawal), which carry some cancellation provisions for students entering particular fields.

**GUARANTEED STUDENT LOAN:** (GSL) Loans awarded to needy students through banks, savings and loans associations, and credit unions. Family income is not a factor in the awarding of these loans.

**SCHOLARSHIP:** A grant which enables a student to begin or to continue his/her education. No return of service or repayment is necessary. Grant is based upon academic ability or need.

**ROTC BENEFITS:** U.S. Reserved Officers Training Corps (ROTC) offers scholarships to deserving students based upon academic ability and promise. Additionally, advanced ROTC cadets receive \$100.00 per month for up to 10 months each school year.

**VETERANS BENEFITS:** Educational benefits offered under the GI Bill" to honorable discharged veterans. Military dependents or widows of deceased veterans may also apply.

One of the greatest motivating factors that should influence Black women to enter the broadcast industry, (besides the obvious monetary benefits), is to help get some control over how we feel about ourselves and how others feel about us. As I said earlier in the handbook, media has greatly influenced the image of Black women. Many of our Black leaders are not happy with the image the broadcast industry has provided for minorities in general. But there is, again, a uniqueness to Black women in this industry that transcends race and sex. All these women have a need to defy the odds. They want the power to influence the future.

To substantiate the need for Black women to seek and be given an opportunity to achieve positions that will allow them to more actively participate in programming and employment decisions in the television industry, I have summarized the following findings and recommendations excerpted from "Window Dressing on the Set," a report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights done in 1979 and updated in 1985.

## FINDINGS

### Stereotyped Portrayals in Television Drama

Television drama continues in its failure to reflect the gender and racial/ethnic composition of the American population.

- o White males continue to be over-represented, constituting 62.7 percent of all characters in the 9 year period 1975 - 1984 compared to 39.9 percent of the U.S. population.
- o White female characters continue to be under-represented, constituting 24.1 percent of all characters in the same period compared to 41.6 percent of the U.S. population.
- o Minority females, constituting 3.6 percent of all characters, are also under-represented when compared to the U.S. population of which they make up 9.6 percent.
- o Although minority males constitute 9.6 percent of all characters (compared to 8.9 percent of the U.S. population), the stereotyped quality of their portrayals seriously detracts from the quantity of minority male characters who appear in television drama.
- o Minority males are disproportionately seen in comic roles. Moreover, the percentage of minority male characters in comic roles has increased during the past 3 years, despite the fact that the proportion of all characters playing comic roles has decreased significantly.

Stereotyping of minorities in television drama continues. It seems that it has been a tradition for the hero and the heroine to be white. Minority characters appear to have only been placed in most dramas as what might be considered comic relief. The type of roles that minorities are cast in are usually the underdog, someone not as smart, not as strong as or someone to be laughed at;

Minorities, regardless of sex, are disproportionately cast in teenage roles; in contrast, white male characters are disproportionately cast in adult roles.

Minorities, regardless of sex, are less frequently portrayed in an identifiable occupation that occurred in the sample. White female characters appeared in 81.4 percent of them and minority male characters appeared in 74.1 percent, but minority female characters were seen in only 38.9 percent of the occupations.

- o The proportion minority characters of both sexes who are not in identifiable occupations increased significantly during the 9 year period, 1975 through 1984, over the previous 6 years.
- o When minority characters are seen in occupations, they are typically in jobs with lower status than those of majority characters. Minorities are more likely than whites to be service workers and students. Majority males are more likely than minority males to be doctors, managers, and journalists; majority females are more frequently seen as secretaries than are minority females.
- o Although minority males characters are disproportionately seen in comic roles throughout the evening, the tendency is greatly pronounced during the family hours when 27 percent of all comic roles are played by minority males, although they constitute only 12 percent of the characters who appear in the family hour programs.
- o Although violence in the form of killing has decreased, significantly more characters are now seen hurting others. This is true among minority characters. Regardless of sex, significantly more minority characters were portrayed as hurting others.

Casting minorities as teenagers and in an identifiable occupation has an extremely adverse effect on minority children. The image they get of their elders is that they are immature, aimless and violent. While on the other hand,

white male characters for the most part are responsible professional, working adults.

I believe that the following recommendations may give some insight on how the problems of the broadcast industry can be solved.

### Recommendation Of The Study

#### Portrayal of Women and Minorities in Television Programming

The Federal Communications Commission should conduct an inquiry and proposed rule-making in which it would investigate the relationship between the network programming decision-making process, the resulting portrayal of minorities and women, and the impact of these portrayals on viewers.

Production companies and network programming executives should incorporate more minorities and women into television drama. Toward this end they should undertake the following measures:

- o Develop series that portray minorities and women playing a variety of roles comparable in diversity and prestige to those played by white males; (The Cosby Show once again comes to the fore.)
- o Actively solicit scripts from minority and female writers; and
- o Actively solicit advice from citizen groups regarding the ways in which minorities and women are portrayed.

#### Women and Minorities in Network News

The role of news correspondent and/or anchor person has evolved into a significant role. It is the on-the-air newscaster that everyone looks to for information that may effect their very survival; information that frequently shapes the direction that the viewers' life will head. It is as if society looks at the newscaster as not just someone who reports the news but someone who guides them through crisis.

Again white males dominate this very important role in society; white males continue to constitute the great majority of all correspondents, 82.2 percent.

- o The proportion of minority female correspondents in the sample declined significantly, from 3.5 percent to 0.0 percent.
- o Although the proportion of minority male correspondents in the sample increased significantly, from 2.4 percent to 7.8 percent, minority males continue to be under-represented as correspondents.

As we look at these findings and recommendations, it is increasingly obvious that the problem lies somewhere in the realm of program and employment decisions. The people in television stations and networks who make these are titled Officials and Managers. These are television's administrative people; when all is said and done, administration controls the overall image in broadcasting. White males again dominate this area of television holding the vast majority of the executive and managerial positions.

- o The percentage of white males who were officials and managers in 1982 (64.9 percent) is significantly higher than the overall percentage of white males employees at the surveyed 40 stations (57.2 percent).
- o In contrast, the percentages of black male and black female officials and managers are significantly lower than the overall percentage of black employees at the surveyed 40 stations.
- o The percentages of other minorities employed as officials and managers are so small that statistical tests fail to show significant differences.
- o Although the percentage of white female officials and managers (21.3 percent) is almost identical with their percentage of white female employees (21.6 percent), white females hold markedly fewer officials and managers' jobs than white males.

No significant increase in the percentages of minorities and women employed as officials and managers in the 40 station sample occurred between 1975 and 1984.

The networks should make training and placement opportunities in decision-making positions in their news departments available to minorities and women.

Representation of women and minorities in many editorial, reporting, and writing positions is critical to the development of a broader and more varied concept of what constitutes the news. The Today Program on NBC may be moving in this direction with the inclusion of Bryant Gumbel, a Black, and Connie Chung, as Asian American, as hosts on this widely viewed morning show.

Although the FCC regulates equal employment opportunity at broadcast stations, it is not empowered to do so at the headquarters level at ABC, CBS, and NBC where it is significantly lower than at the stations owned by the networks, where equal employment is regulated. While the FCC's equal employment enforcement efforts must be increased to include national networks, that Commission's employment regulations have, nevertheless, provided some impetus for improved employment for minorities and women, particularly in non-decision making positions at the station level. These regulations should be extended to the networks and to all broadcast group owners. Requiring them to prepare employment reports and equal employment opportunity programs applicable to all their employees should encourage increased employment opportunities for minorities and women in program and news decision-making and thereby improve and diversify the portrayal of minorities and women.

It is again obvious that broadcasting needs to maintain an effective affirmative action program designed to achieve equitable employment for minorities and women. If through deregulation the FCC has made a decision that affirmative action is no longer needed, a terrible mistake has been made.



Every broadcast licensee, in return for its use of the public airwaves, accepts an obligation to serve all segments of the community. Regardless of the size of its work force, every broadcaster is a public trustee and should be held accountable for employing minorities and women in an equitable manner.

## CONCLUSION

Former FCC Commissioner Charlotte T. Reid, has noted that women have made significant gains in the upper four categories but has also admitted that "all is not peaches and cream." In this regard she stated, "I continue to receive complaints that women are deposited in dead-end jobs or given positions that amount to little more than glorified clerks with quasi-impressive titles. I also hear grumblings of overt favoritism toward men in hiring, promotions and occasionally regarding salary".

Some reserch done by Ms. Reid in the late seventies concluded that the positions most frequently held by Black women who were considered departments heads (managers and officials) were as follows: manager of community relations, press and publicity, and director of personnel and labor relations.

The traffic manager position was frequently held by a Black or White woman.

What needs to happen in the television industry is that Blacks and women maneuver ourselves into the more potent positions now held by white men. Some examples of these sort of positions are, director of programming, director of operations, station manager, vice-president and general manager.

Some of the Black women I talked to in local television express a different feeling, anguish, based on the frustrating sense that they are afraid that we can no longer move forward. They feel we have lost all of our strength because of the current lack of support from governmental powers. Nevertheless, this attitude was confirmed by the testimony of six successful women in television journalism, including Connie Chung, Jane Pauley, and Rita Flynn, on a recent two-part Donahue Program (Dec. 11-12, 1985) I disagree, for I believe our strength is within ourselves. We as Black women in communications must build a support system. a network so powerful that we won't need some of the crutches of the

past, and are free to rise without someone else's preconceived notion of the limitations of our talent and general capabilities.

We must be aware of our rights as employees and move and participate within the rules of the game. Once we truly know our rights and the rules, a lot of fears that are holding us back will subside. The FCC opened the door for us in the mid-seventies. Many of us, such as myself, found ourselves in broadcasting positions as a direct result of development of the push for equal opportunities for Blacks and women.

I believe the information in this guide book can help every Black woman going into the industry. She must be aware of the circumstances she faces in making her career decisions in the area of television production or management. Armed with this information we can be fully aware of the challenges ahead of us to improve minority representation in each of these important areas of the television industry.

Radio was deregulated in 1984 and on February 11, 1985, television was also deregulated. How this will effect minorities and women is a serious question but the FCC has not totally lost control of the television industry. Reports on employment and community services are still required of stations. However, I believe it is still necessary to stay on our toes, and that it will always be important for minority women to maintain a professional network. This is the only way that we can help ourselves and other Black women aspiring to enter the television industry.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Leslie L. Lawson and Ruth N. Swann, Financial Aid for Minorities in Mass Communication (Hampton, Virginia Hampton Institute, 1981), p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Essence Magazine.

<sup>3</sup>TVB Television Bureau of Advertising, Cable Television Target Selling (New York, 1983), insert.

<sup>4</sup>Naomi Simms, The Success Book For Black Women (Doubleday Company, 1979).

<sup>5</sup>Charlene Mitchell (with Thomas Burdich), The Extra Edge (Acropolis Books Ltd., Washington, D.C. 1983).

<sup>6</sup>Betty Lehon Harragan, Games Mother Never Taught You; Corporate Gamesmanship For Women (Wonna Books, New York, 1977).

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