



From the Desk of the Executive Director

As the Executive Director of the Minority Business Alliance of Southwest Michigan (MBA), I would like to welcome you, the small minority- and women-owned businesses, to our organization for without you we could not exist. MBA came into existence in 2001 because we discovered that small minority- and women-owned businesses needed a place to unite themselves to make sure that the economic playing fields were more accessible.

When Affirmative Action was implemented by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, his intent was to assist oppressed groups in achieving equality. However, over the years, Affirmative Action has taken many hits and the nation's courts, both high and low, have upheld the law.

Would you believe that more than forty years later the American people are voting down Affirmative Action, state by state, and two years ago, the State of Michigan was included in the states who were against it.

The question we must ask ourselves is what is next? Taking ones rights away can lead to the removal of our other God given rights. Women and people of color aren't the only ones that will lose ground. If this trend continues, it will affect our global marketplace, like the other countries where our jobs are being out-sourced.

We here at MBA know that **TOGETHER WE STAND AND DIVIDED WE SHALL SURELY FALL!** Therefore we offer our members three distinguished lines of business to help make your business strong:

- ✓ **Networking / Membership** (including but not limited to)
 - Investigative Taskforce
 - Resource development
 - Black pages (which are equivalent to the yellow pages)
 - Certification
 - Education with cultural sensitivity
- ✓ **EXPO**
 - MBA hosts an annual Minority- and Women-Owned Business Expo each year at the Radisson Hotel. Our goal is to host the Expo at different locations throughout Southwest Michigan. In our highest year, we served 45 minority- and women-owned business exhibitors.
- ✓ **Youth Development** (KidBiz program featured in *Ebony Magazine*, March 2008)
 - As entrepreneurs, we must pass on the torch to our youth. MBA has created a program called KidBiz Entrepreneurial Concepts that teaches at-risk youth, ages 9 – 18, hands on, how to own and operate their own businesses. First and foremost this program teaches students character building skills. MBA is the pilot for the State of Michigan.

We encourage you to become a unified voice that is ready, willing and able to produce product, goods and services that will stand above the rest. Economic development for all is what we stand for.

MBA's motto is to **BE WORLD CLASS** and we can not do it without **YOU!**

Respectfully Submitted,
Erma Gordon, Executive Director
Minority Business Alliance of Southwest Michigan

UNITED TOGETHER FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS