



Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists
P. O. Box 8232
Philadelphia, PA 19101
www.pabj.org
501(c)(3) organization

November 19, 2003

Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists **30th**



Anniversary Reception

Philadelphia Inquirer/
Daily News Public Room

November 19, 2003

6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

My name is Denise Clay and I'm the current president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. On behalf of myself and the organization, I'd like to welcome you to our 30th Anniversary celebration.



I'd also like to thank the members of our 30th Anniversary reception committee - particularly Chairperson Sarah Glover, Sherry Howard and Gloria Blakely - for your efforts in making this evening possible. You did a lot in a relatively short period of time and did it well. I thank you for your work and salute your achievement.

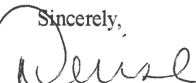
In 1973, a group that included many of you in this room got together to create an entity that would not only serve as an advocate for black journalists in the city of Philadelphia, but also as a way of making sure that issues germane to Philadelphia's black community were introduced into the public discourse. Your efforts have led to not only the creation of a national association, but also to greater awareness of of the black community and the issues we face as a people.

Your efforts have also served as a blueprint for other minority journalists to follow. In August of next year, the National Association of Black Journalists will join with the Asian-American Journalists Association, the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, and the Native American Journalists Association to take part in the Unity 2004 Convention. Had it not been for the trail you blazed when you created PABJ 30 years ago, this event would not be taking place.

You should be proud of your accomplishment and how well it has stood the test of 30 years time. We are proud and honored to call you our forefathers and foremothers and are more than humbled that you have graced us with your presence this evening. My hope is that it won't be the last time we see you because, although we have done much in 30 years, there is much that needs to be done. We need your guidance, direction, and the occasional reminder of what is the right path when we go astray.

Again, I thank you for making the time to be with us this evening and hope you enjoy our program.

Sincerely,


Denise Clay
PABJ President

Many Thanks

The Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists would like to offer thanks to the following persons and organizations for their work and support of this reception: Denise Clay, Sarah J. Glover, Sherry Howard, Sia Nyorkor, Gloria Blakely, the Professional Mentors, Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, PECO Energy and Philadelphia Newspapers Inc.

PABJ 30th Anniversary Reception Program

- 6:00 p.m. **PABJ STUDENT OUTREACH PROJECT**
College and high school students mentored by professionals
- 7:10 p.m. **INTRODUCTIONS**
PABJ History Project
- 7:15 p.m. **REMARKS**
- Mayor John F. Street
City of Philadelphia Presentation
- “TAKING US BACK” ROUNDTABLE**
Founding and Early PABJ Members, Invited Guests:
Acel Moore, Joe Davidson, Chuck Stone, Claude Lewis,
Mal Johnson, Violet Johnson, Francine Cheeks,
J. Whyatt Mondesire, Sandra D. Long, Marilyn Darling,
Reggie Bryant, Sam Pressley and Elmer Smith
- Audience Comments
- Herbert Lowe
National Association of Black Journalists President
- Denise Clay
Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists President

PABJ Background

The Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists (PABJ) was formed in 1973 by a group of Philadelphia journalists concerned about the lack of black journalists in the media and the dearth of coverage of the black community. PABJ is the founding chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), which was formed in 1975 in Washington, D. C. NABJ presently boasts more than 3000 members. Philadelphia hosted NABJ's annual convention in 1995.

PABJ produces a variety of programming each year: a Media Access Workshop, which draws representatives from more than 100 community organizations and businesses; training and career development workshops for journalists; Artists Among Us: A Celebration of Journalists; student outreach and book-signings. As a National Association of Black Journalists affiliate, PABJ participates in NABJ's regional and national programming. PABJ meets monthly featuring guest speakers. Recently, PABJ hosted a 2003 Philadelphia Mayoral Debate between Mayor John F. Street and Republican challenger Sam Katz. The chapter gives out scholarships to deserving journalism students each year. Today, PABJ consists of 60 members, which includes journalists, media professionals and students. PABJ is a non-profit organization, also known for educating the community on the issues. **BECOME A MEMBER and JOIN US TODAY!**

PABJ 1973: From The Legends Who Lived It

Acel Moore

He was a reporter at the Philadelphia Inquirer. In 1968, an organization called Black Communicators, which included Blacks in all media, was formed. The group functioned for about three or four years, gave out scholarships and worked with students. Some people, however, wanted to form an organization made up entirely of working journalists. In 1973, Moore, Chuck Stone and Claude Lewis sent out letters with their newspapers' logos (Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Daily News and Evening Bulletin, respectively) to about three dozen reporters asking them to meet to consider forming a group. At the time, they had determined that there were about 120 Black journalists working in all media from Trenton to Wilmington. Those who met named the organization the Association of Black Journalists, with Chuck Stone as the first president. Artist Earl E. Davis created the logo.

"It was an attempt from the beginning to increase our numbers, to be in a position to tell our own stories, to be a pressure point inside the industry," Moore said. ABJ ran community workshops on accessing the media and held a series of lunches with newsmakers. One of its biggest projects was the annual banquet, which drew more than 1,000 people. Speakers included FCC Commissioner Benjamin Hooks, Sen. Hubert Humphrey and Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson. The group also spoke on behalf of its members who had been unfairly treated. Among other black organizations, Moore said, ABJ was looked upon as "militant."

In 1974, Moore and Reggie Bryant hosted a show called "Black Perspectives on the News" on WHY? that featured major newsmakers. It was a weekly show that ran for five years. "It provided a vehicle for print and broadcast journalists to work together," Moore said.

Black journalists covering an event in Washington in 1975 came together to talk about forming a national organization. ABJ's constitution and bylaws served as the model. "Max Robinson hosted the group. A lot of people were afraid to put their names on the list (to form the organization). A lot of them didn't sign," Moore said. "No one would have predicted that the organization would have evolved to have the influence it has. Some people said it wouldn't work."

Claude Lewis

I was working at the Evening Bulletin. I was associate editor and columnist. As I recall, the very first meeting was held with Acel Moore and Chuck Stone and me. There probably were one or two others. The meeting was brief and we considered it bold back then. An association of BLACK journalists? Wow. When we met with several others, there was one guy, Tom Johnson, who refused to join. Tom, a good friend of mine, now ill, said he could not join an association with the name "Black" in it because his editors would not like it. Eventually, Tom changed his mind and joined us. He was at the New York Times back then. We were generally excluded from most journalism organizations and decided to form our own.

Francine Cheeks

I worked at WCAU-TV, which was a CBS-owned-and-operated station from the time it was bought by William

Paley in the 1930s until deregulation in the 1990s. I arrived in 1972 and left in 1977 to go to graduate school at Columbia. Some of my strongest memories involve our annual dinners: one year, Sen. Hubert Humphrey came and gave remarks; another year we had Teddy Pendergrass as featured entertainment (1977). We drew around 1,000 people. We really earned respect and showed our strength to the media owners and the general public.

There had been many attempts to organize communicators, PR people and various other collections. Our organization was the first time a black organization composed only of working journalists was established in Philadelphia. We had a good mix of broadcast and print members (reporters, editors, producers, anchors, etc.) from both Black and white papers. I returned to WCAU in 1981 as manager of news administration (comparable to assistant news director) and worked there until 1987. Although the total numbers of Blacks in the media were smaller then, it was an exciting and important time to be a Black journalist. Moore and Reggie Bryant had a weekly program on WHY?TV called "Black Perspective on the News," like a Black Meet the Press that was seen nationwide. We interviewed many policy and opinion-makers.

Reggie Bryant

Reggie Bryant was working at several places when PABJ was founded, including WPEN, and WMGK. He also worked on "Black Perspectives on the News," a news program on WHY? that featured prominent newsmakers. Founding of PABJ was something the early journalists were "forced to do," he said. "There was absolutely blatant racism in the city's newsrooms. The newsrooms were all white at the newspapers, radio and television, and those blacks who were in got terrible treatment." He saw the organization as one that could be an advocate for black journalists who were being treated unfairly by their companies. He also hoped that the group would become a major force in making the industry more accountable.

Elmer Smith

I was working at the (Evening) Bulletin as a night-side rewrite man full time by May 1973. I had been a part-time, night-side rewrite man for the Bulletin while studying journalism during the day in my senior year at Temple University. That started in January 1973. Claude Lewis was on the verge of becoming a columnist. Acel Moore was a reporter already, and soon, I believe, to become a Pulitzer winner if he hadn't already done that. The big gun at the Inky was Art Peters, a fine writer who came to The Inquirer as a columnist after starting his career at the (Philadelphia) Tribune. We began in the Institute of Black Ministries, a huge converted brownstone mansion on the northwest corner of Broad and Girard.

The leading antagonists of our movement were Acel Moore, Claude Lewis and, mostly, Chuck Stone. Reggie Bryant, who was co-producing with Acel a TV news interview show called "Black Perspectives on the News" was an early and active organizer. Sam Pressley, who followed me to the Bulletin by less than a year, was active within the first year or so. We had several women founders (including Pam Haynes, Jan Gorham, Francine Cheeks).

Membership requirements were stringent. You had to

have a job not just in the industry but doing journalism. We even instituted a rule that said you could not become a full member without a year or two of experience. We were guarding against the tendency for groups like this to become social organizations. There had been a group called the Black Communicators or something that soon became essentially the Cabaret Communicators.

Greg Morrison

I was a radio reporter at WCAU in 1973 when PABJ was formed. The incident that sparked our coming together was not so much racism by white managers but when a so-called "community activist" took a swing at Chuck Stone. That angered many black reporters who felt it was time to come together. Once we were all in the same room we also started talking about the problems that existed in our various shops and the common frustrations we felt with no black managers or department heads. Our early meetings were held in a church at Girard and Broad Streets.

Eddie Stinson, then a writer with the Philadelphia Tribune, and I worked on the constitution and bylaws for the group. Working along with Carole Norris, we came up with a document that became the framework for the start of PABJ. Early members included Jerome Mondesire, Acel Moore, Reggie Bryant, Claude Lewis, Sam Pressley, Joe Davidson, Trudy Haynes, Edie Huggins, Bob Perkins, Brahin Ahmaddiya, Charlie Harmon, Elmer Smith, just to name a few. I cannot give you the exact date (of the founding) but it was around November of that year and we decided to hold a scholarship fundraiser with then-FCC member Benjamin Hooks as the speaker.

Paul Bennett

Paul Bennett was a reporter at the Philadelphia Tribune. He was a writer of the chapter's bylaws as part of a three-person committee. "The professional black journalism community wasn't that big back then," he said. "We all knew each other socially, so it was verbal outreach. I was extremely gung-ho, young, impressionable and up for anything at the time. I worked on the bylaws committee with Warner Brown, who's now with the Washington Post. They were used as a framework for the national organization."

"To be honest, the organization was plagued by egos from day one. People don't understand sometimes that the organization isn't the sum of its parts. It's what the mission is. We had the daily folks versus the weekly folks versus the TV and radio folks when it came to deciding who the 'real journalists' are."

OTHER FOUNDING & EARLY MEMBERS

Chuck Stone, a founding member, worked at the Philadelphia Daily News at the time. He currently teaches in the School of Journalism & Mass Communications at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and is a syndicated columnist. He was PABJ's first president, as well as NABJ's first president in 1975.

Mal Johnson, a founding member, was a television reporter at the former WKBS in Philadelphia. She became a treasurer of PABJ. She moved to Washington, D.C., to become a correspondent for Cox Broadcasting

Co., where she worked for 27 years before retiring. She now consults and serves on many boards, including the International Association of Women in Radio & Television. She worked with Paul Brock, NABJ's first executive director, in Washington to assemble lists of journalists for the formation of NABJ in 1975.

Harold Yates was a producer and director at KYW in the early days of PABJ. He became a member at the November 1974 meeting. He remembers that because it was a few days after he moved to Philadelphia, and soon after, he covered the election as a field producer for news at KYW. He later created City Lights, and other public affairs shows and documentaries. He hired Acel Moore, Jerry Mondesire, Karen Warrington and others to do commentary on a show hosted by Malcolm Poindexter. Yates left TV in 1983 and began Docu-Vision, a freelance videography company.

Garland Thompson joined the organization soon after it was founded. Currently, he teaches a course on social problems at Delaware County College and geography at Temple University. He is the content manager for the U.S. Black Engineers and Information Technology Magazine and U.S. Hispanic Engineers and Information Technology Magazine. He formerly worked for the Baltimore Sun.

Malcolm Poindexter was an early member of the organization and worked at KYW-TV at the time. He is currently semi-retired.

Karen Warrington was active in the organization during its formative years. She currently is communications director for U.S. Rep. Bob Brady. She is the former host of the Network on WHAT radio.

Don Camp was one of the founding members. At the time he was a photographer for the Evening and Sunday Bulletin. Don is now Artist in Residence at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pa. He made the transition to fine arts and "is loving it." He was a Guggenheim Fellow, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow and received a Pennsylvania Council for the Arts Award. His works can be found in museums and private homes.

J. Wyatt Mondesire was a reporter at the Philadelphia Inquirer during the early years. He now owns the Philadelphia Sun newspaper, and is president of the Philadelphia chapter of the NAACP.

Sandra D. Long traveled from her home in Wilmington, where she worked at the News Journal in 1974, to attend meetings of ABJ. She is a founding member of NABJ. Currently, she is a deputy managing editor at the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Violet "Vi" Johnson was an account executive with Mark Hyman and Associates, and coordinated several of ABJ's banquets. "It was so fantastic," she said. "They were so happy. They made more money than they expected." At the first banquet, she recalled, ABJ made about \$2,000 and the banquet drew about 1,000 people.



November 19, 2003

Greetings PABJ:

Congratulations on your 30th anniversary. This is truly a milestone -- both for black journalists and our community in Philadelphia and for black journalists and our communities across the country. Your chapter's legacy of service to its members and its community deserves every accolade and more.



As a native of Camden, N.J., the journalism that many of your members produced in the 1970s helped inspire me and many others like me to follow in your footsteps. I fondly remember, in particular, listening as a teenager to the hourly news reports from WDAS radio and depending on black journalists to keep our community abreast of the issues affecting our lives.

So it was a great honor years later for me to not only work at The Philadelphia Inquirer as a reporter for more than six years, but to also join the PABJ during that time. Much of what I learned while with the chapter I am now working to help share with other chapters nationwide.

In 2005, NABJ will celebrate its own 30th anniversary. NABJ owes much to PABJ, not only for helping to create it in 1975, but for also grooming its future leaders. No less than five of our 15 national presidents -- Chuck Stone, Arthur Fennell, Vanessa Williams, Will Sutton and myself - - have either led or belonged to PABJ. So, too, have many other members of our national board of directors, including now, NABJ Secretary Sarah Glover and Parliamentarian Melanie Burney.

Congratulations, again, PABJ. Keep up the great work. Continue to inspire.

Sincerely,

Herbert Lowe
NABJ President

Additional PABJ Pioneers (list may not be complete)

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Sam Pressley | Bill Thompson | Vernon Odom | Jack Jones |
| Marilyn Darling | Artis Hall | Lamont Steptoe | Will Sutton |
| Edie Huggins | Jan Gorham | Michael Boyer | Ewart Rouse |
| Trudy Haynes | Tyree Johnson | Earl E. Davis | Harry Gould |
| Pam Haynes | Mary Mason | Mumia Abu-Jamal | Dwight Ott |
| | | | Joe Davidson |



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PABJ's 3rd Annual "Artists Among Us"
Sunday, December 7th from 2 to 6 p.m.
New Freedom Theatre, 1346 N. Broad St.
Artists Needed, Black Nativity Tix \$30
for 3 p.m. performance, call 215-893-5740