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THE DEEP BENCH

A Monthly Newsletter by The Office of African American
Affairs

MORE ARTICLES
ON NM BLACK
PROFESSIONALS

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February, 2021

The Office of African American Affairs is proud to recognize the many Black professionals throughout New Mexico who are committed to impacting the lives of Black New Mexicans. Their education, expertise, and expertise has provided them the poise to be leaders in business and public and private sectors.

Each month we will recognize three individuals, spotlighting their accomplishments and their impact in New Mexico. If you would like to nominate a Black professional (or yourself) to be included, please send your name and contact information to andreat.watson@state.nm.us.

Rachael A. Wooden

Senior Director
Global Manufacturing, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Rachael Wooden is an entrepreneur, wife, mother, corporate executive, motivational speaker, and New Orleans, La native now enjoying life in New Mexico. Rachael Wooden is an energetic and dynamic professional who focuses on storytelling, sharing “get real” practical tips, and defining actions to enable individuals and organizations to thrive. Rachael focuses on motivating and educating while practicing true authenticity. With 17 years of experience working for Fortune 500 Companies within the US and internationally, Rachael has honed the ability to ignite the fire within individuals and organizations, cultures, and styles to drive others to take bold steps forward. She has been recognized for leadership excellence throughout her career from Intel, Procter & Gamble, Kellogg, General Mills, and Nike. Over the years, her formal accolades include the 40 Under Forty Award, Business First

Diverse Business Leader Award honoring leaders who are advancing diversity and inclusion, Ethics in Business Nominee, and Exceptional Women Leader panelist on behalf of the Albuquerque Office of Civil Rights. Rachael also delivers numerous foundational training including, Labels We Wear, a curriculum focused on shedding stereotypes and choosing your personal brand, “yoU”-Turn curriculum centered on authentic leadership, among many more.



What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community?

Connection. African Americans make up a relatively small portion of the population in New Mexico, so I was delighted to see the intentionality to connect with each other when my family and I became New Mexico residents. There is so much power in uniting, getting to know each other as individuals, as well as supporting our work and businesses. The outreach and connection that exists help families settle in and network with each other. There is a wealth of talent in this area so it is inspiring to see black leaders in the community support and leverage our skills.

Senior Director

*Global
Manufacturing
Nike*

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be?

I hope to give a message of boldness and inspiration. I want people to see a leader in the community that is creating opportunities for individual advancement, career progression, and does so through fair and equitable process. I also truly enjoy seeing others succeed. If I can enable success whether through direct leadership, engaging in the community, sharing my story, or just providing kind and motivational words then I feel that I am making an impact on New Mexico.

What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

Continue the intentional outreach as well as connecting with national/international organizations. There are many programs (youth, educational, professional) that expand within and externally to our state. The more we can let others know what New Mexico has to offer and see people that represent them thriving in the community is a powerful message. Representation is key. Publications such as Deep Bench that provide platforms to share stories and talents is what generates excitement and where people can see successful leaders that look like them.



Johnathon Huff

Director and Chief of Safety Environment,
Safety, and Health, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Johnathon D. Huff is the Director of Environment, Safety and Health (ES&H) and Chief of Safety for Sandia National Laboratories' more than 14,000 employees across multiple sites. He has more than a decade of experience as an engineering and operations leader developing technology and integrating safety throughout the system development lifecycle, from research and development to high-volume manufacturing. Johnathon joined Sandia in 2011 as systems and electrical engineer developing technologies for the Department of Defense and performing analysis for nuclear weapons components. While in National Security Programs, he led a portfolio of research and development programs ranging from cybersecurity to manufacturing. In his senior manager roles, Johnathon was a steward for the Heterogeneous Integration capabilities at Sandia and responsible for the portfolio encompassing the research, development, and production of Microelectromechanical Systems, Radio Frequency Microsystems, and Focal Plane Array. Prior to joining Sandia, Johnathon worked for Lockheed Martin as an international program manager and systems engineer and for Intel as a process engineer. Johnathon is a graduate of Harvard University's Strategies for Leading Successful Change Initiatives, has published several articles, and was recognized by Albuquerque Business First as a 40 Under Forty honoree. He is a certified safety manager and certified project management professional. Johnathon received his bachelor's degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a master's from Drexel University, both in electrical engineering. He earned his doctorate in Industrial and Systems Engineering from Mississippi State University.

What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community?

New Mexico's Black community includes people from across the nation and the globe, and the diversity within our community helps foster and drive innovation that positively impacts the New Mexico economy. While it is a small community, we are able to find time to come together and celebrate our history and heritage —making others who move here feel more welcome..



*Director and Chief
of Safety*

*Sandia National
Laboratories.*

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be?

My passion is to champion the next generation of leaders in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). I would like to use the opportunities I have to create opportunities for others by sharing my experiences, mentoring, and increasing awareness of the prospects that exist in our state. For our Black youth, I have developed a workshop to teach elementary to high school students about goal setting. In the Hands-on, Minds-on Technology summer program I teach a course on career development that prepares students for careers in STEM. In addition to STEM outreach activities, I am passionate about serving those in our community who are in need. I have been a long-term volunteer for efforts that help provide for those who are hungry.

What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

Many people may not know what all New Mexico has to offer — I certainly did not know much about it before I moved here. I think by partnering with groups like the Office of African American Affairs, New Mexico can do more to promote the great people, our sense of community, affordable living, as well as diverse career options. As the executive champion for the Georgia Institute of Technology at Sandia Labs, it is my personal goal to share with Georgia Tech students and with others at universities and colleges across the nation about the many opportunities here. Especially in the area of science and technology, Black professionals and students can pursue careers at one of our two national labs or with numerous other corporations that support national security, energy advancements, and cyber technologies.



Dr. Brandale Mills Cox

Director of Healthcare Coordination Division
Department of Veteran Services, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Brandale Mills Cox is a communications professional, professor, and researcher. She is currently the Director of Communications at the Bernalillo County District Attorney's Office, where she handles media outreach on behalf of the office. She is also a founder and principal of Inclusive Market Research Group, a full-service research firm specializing in inclusive and culturally sensitive market research, helping brands create communications strategies. In this role, Dr. Mills Cox has facilitated training covering inclusive communications strategies and has worked with organizations such as the Center for Nonprofit Excellence and N.M. Counts. She is formerly a Media Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau, where she managed the media strategy for the 2020 Census for the state of New Mexico. Dr. Mills Cox's desire for positive social advocacy is reflected in many of her roles within the journalism, communication, public relations and event coordinating fields. Her passion for diverse representation is seen in her recently published book, "Black Women Filmmakers and Black Love on Screen" which offers a thorough examination of depictions of Black Love in films directed by Black women and the importance of diversity in Hollywood to create a more comprehensive representation of communities of color. Dr. Mills Cox earned her Bachelors of Arts degree in Print Journalism from the University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, New Mexico), her Masters of Arts and Doctorate degree from Howard University (Washington, DC) in Mass Communications and Media Studies and Communication, Culture and Media Studies. She is an active member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and currently lives in Albuquerque with her husband and their 7-month-old daughter.



What do you believe are the strengths of the NM Black Community?

Like many black communities, it is the resiliency that the NM black community has shown when facing adversity. It is the ability to find beauty and hope in the darkness and create masterpieces with little to no resources.

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to be?

I want my influence to be change, I want it to be that I have helped with creating a seat at the table for Black New Mexicans. I want individuals to be knowledgeable, and accepting of their roles as important in a community that may not see them for the greatness that lies within them.

What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

Advertise the beauty of the land and all the resources available that can be used for blacks to grow their businesses and families.

*Director of
Communications*

*Bernalillo County
District Attorney's
Office*

What do you want your influence on the NM Black Community to Be?

I would like to continue to be an advocate for the Black experience in New Mexico. Considering the Black population is only 2-3%, it is essential that those with influence in the community always take into account the Black New Mexican experience in their professional and personal lives. I'd like to be remembered as a strong proponent for the equality and just treatment of Blacks in New Mexico, using my platform to advance the issues of Blacks in our state.

What can NM do to attract more Blacks to our state?

In order to attract more Blacks to New Mexico, I think there needs to be a concerted effort to create more professional job opportunities. The state's beautiful landscape and diverse culture are unknown to many because of the lack of exposure people have to the state. By increasing professional opportunities within the state, more Blacks from across the nation will be more inclined to settle in New Mexico.



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Due to the temporary closing of OAAA, we are sending out content concerning COVID-19 and information that affects the African American Community.

If you have any questions, please call
505-383-6222 and follow the prompt.
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