



IN PRAISE OF BLACK ENGINEERS

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‘Engineering the Gateway to Success’

National Society of Black Engineers convenes in St. Louis

By **Trey Prothro**
For The St. Louis American

More than 8,000 members of the National Society of Black Engineers convened this Wednesday, March 23 for their annual conference at the America's Center in downtown St. Louis.

The NSBE delegates will inhabit downtown and various other areas of St. Louis until the convention's closing this Sunday, March 27.

Of the 8,000-member delegation, St. Louisians account for close to 500 of the participants, ranging in age from 6th graders to alumni members, says Ronald Moore, the director of the NSBE Pre-College Initiative for the St. Louis area and a core organizer of this year's conference.

This year's convention theme, "Engineering the Gateway to Success," pays homage to the host city while staying on message with the organization's mission: "to increase the number of culturally responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community," according to the NSBE website.

Last year's national convention was held outside the country in Toronto, Canada, and the year before in Las Vegas. So its presence in St. Louis this weekend brings the organization a bit closer to its Midwestern roots.

Looking back at NSBE's history: In 1971, two African-American undergraduate students, Edward Barnett

and Fred Cooper, founded the National Society of Black Engineers, commonly referred to by its acronym NSBE, on the campus of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.

The organization was conceived to provide support in recruiting and retaining African-American engineering students. From 1971 to 1974, the organization's identity began to take shape with the help of the "Chicago Six," a group of young men who went onto become the founding fathers of NSBE.

The six founders included Anthony Harris, Brian Harris, Stanley L. Kirtley, John W. Logan Jr., Edward A. Coleman and George A. Smith.

After witnessing the success the organization had on his campus, Anthony Harris, who was the Purdue Chapter president at the time, wrote letters to more than 200 accredited engineering programs across the country to expand the organization and its network. A quarter of the universities responded to Harris' letter.

As a result, from April 10-12, 1975, the first national NSBE convention was called to order. The first conference delegation was 48 students, according to the NSBE site.

Within 36 years, the organization has grown from a mere six members to more than 31,000, and the conference delegation has grown from 48 to more than 8,000. With the expansion from Purdue University, NSBE is now present on more than 250 college campuses and has alumni worldwide.



Abe Adewale, a principal of St. Louis-based ABNA Engineering Inc., networks with members of the National Society of Black Engineers at Washington University during a recent kick-off event for NSBE's annual conference, being held in St. Louis through Sunday.

NSBE family

With a variety of professional organizations available for engineers and other industries, some might wonder what has aided in NSBE's fast growth. Nicole Adewale, principal of ABNA

Engineering Inc. and an NSBE alumna, believes NSBE owes its success to heroes among the organization. Others say the largest factor is its real-world professional connections and support.

"NSBE is gearing students early to make a decision," Ronald Moore said. That decision is what to major in

college. "It allows young people to see and touch real engineers who look like them," Moore said.

Some of the real engineers Moore speaks of are people such as the St.

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Arnold Donald with Adrienne Davis, new vice provost at Washington University, at the recent kickoff event for the National Society of Black Engineers conference being held in St. Louis this week.

First VP of NSBE

Executive's executive Arnold Donald was once a student engineering leader

By **Chris King**
Of The St. Louis American

St. Louis knows Arnold Donald as many things: an executive's executive, a civic leader, a philanthropist, an entrepreneur, a polished man about town (when he

isn't on the move in another city or another country).

It is a strain to imagine him as a student engineer, but he was that guy, too. Not surprisingly, he was an executive leader as a student engineer: the first national vice president of the then-new National Society of Black Engineers, elected in the spring of 1976 at the NSBE conference in Los Angeles when he was a student at Washington University.

"Before that, it was a loose organization of independent

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Boeing helps host NSBE in STL

Aerospace giant recruiting black engineers at conference

By **Rebecca S. Rivas**
Of The St. Louis American

When the National Society of Black Engineers convention comes to St. Louis March 23 to 27, the world's largest aerospace company — The Boeing Company — will make its mark.

Boeing team members will be interviewing for positions throughout the conference. Tony Parasida, president of Boeing defense, space & security, global services & support, will be the keynote speaker at the March 24 luncheon. And professional attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with company executives as part of a new mentoring program.

Boeing's own Tyria Riley, who works in program management and strategic initiative, has spent the last 17 months planning for the technical-professional portion of the NSBE conference.

"Every day there is an activity that Boeing is involved in," said Riley, the NSBE technical professional conference planning chairperson for the 37th annual convention.

Having been in leadership roles with NSBE for the past 10 years, Riley said she is excited for people to experience the tremendous talent she believes is out there. Boeing's executives will be spending face time with the NSBE members, and she believes that makes



Boeing employees Kwame A. Ofori, Tyria Riley and Lester Kyles are part of the St. Louis contingency of the National Society of Black Engineers' 37th Annual Convention in St. Louis. During the convention there will be various programs and workshops to benefit grade school, collegiate, graduate, technical professional and international entities of NSBE. Photo by Wiley Price

a strong statement.

"I hope people will take away the understanding that diversity is a focus of the company," she said. "I hope that they see Boeing as a great company for its strong presence in this conference."

At least 8,000 people are expected to attend the conference, held at the America's Center in downtown St. Louis.

Kwame A. Ofori, an electrophysics engineer/scientist at Boeing, said that the conference is not only for engineers but also for business and finance professionals, and even liberal arts majors.

"There is something for everyone there," he said. "There are cultural exhibits, lifestyle exhibits and great speakers. It's going to be an exciting and thorough event. Locals should at least come experience the atmosphere because it is not to be missed."

Ofori said being at Boeing has afforded him the chance to work at the forefront of science technology, something he aspired to as a young man.

"Working in GPS and navigation and control projects has afforded me the chance to travel and expand my

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