



NSBE
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS

The History of NSBE

National Society of
Black Engineers

“If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.”

“Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.”

Quotes of Carter G. Woodson, “Father of Black History”

This document is a brief summary of the history of the National Society of Black Engineers. “The History of NSBE” is a living document updated yearly to capture significant highlights of NSBE’s work and achievements.

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NSBE IN GENERAL

NSBE BASICS

The mission of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) is “to increase the number of culturally responsible Black Engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community.”

NSBE was founded at Purdue University in 1975 by six African-American engineering undergraduates and their faculty advisor. The students, now nicknamed “the Chicago Six,” were Edward A. Coleman, Anthony Harris, Brian Harris, Stanley L. Kirtley (now deceased), John W. Logan Jr. (now deceased) and George A. Smith. The students were advised by Arthur J. Bond, Ph.D., who was the only black engineering faculty member at Purdue at that time.

The NSBE Torch, part of the Society’s National Symbol, represents NSBE members’ everlasting, burning desire to achieve success as engineers in a competitive society and positively affect the quality of life of all people. The lightning bolts of the Symbol represent the striking impact being felt by the society and industry as a result of the contributions and achievements made by the National Society of Black Engineers.

NSBE World Headquarters is located in Alexandria, Va.

NSBE is one of the largest student-governed organizations based in the United States, with more than 24,000 members and more than 600 pre-collegiate, collegiate and NSBE Professionals chapters in the U.S. and abroad. The chapters are divided geographically into six regions.

The first National Conference organized by the Society of Black Engineers, a Purdue University campus organization then led by Anthony Harris, was held at Purdue in 1975. The conference was attended by 48 students from 32 schools. Five important things happened at this event:

- The National Symbol was chosen.
- A rough draft of the National Constitution was written.
- The organization was divided into six geographic regions.
- The first National Chair was elected, John Cason.
- The name for the group was selected: “National Society of Black Engineers.”

NSBE was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the State of Texas, in 1976.

NSBE offers academic excellence programs, scholarships, leadership training, professional development and access to career opportunities for thousands of members annually and provides opportunities for their success that remain unmatched by any other organization. NSBE publishes three national magazines — *NSBE Magazine*, *Career Engineer* and *NSBE Bridge* — and the organization’s official website, www.nsbe.org.

NSBE HISTORY

Two Purdue University undergraduates, Edward Barnette (now deceased) and Fred Cooper, approached the dean of engineering at Purdue University in 1971 with the concept of starting the Black Society of Engineers (BSE). They wanted to establish a student organization to help improve the recruitment and retention of black engineering students. In the late 1960s, a devastating 80 percent of the black freshmen entering the university's engineering program were dropping out. The dean agreed to the idea and assigned the only black faculty member on staff, Arthur J. Bond, Ph.D., as advisor.

Barnett served as the first president of BSE. The fledgling group gained momentum in 1974, with the direction and encouragement of Dr. Bond and the active participation of the young African-American men whose destiny was to become the founders of NSBE. Now known as "the Chicago Six," these men were Edward A. Coleman, Anthony Harris, Brian Harris, Stanley L. Kirtley, John W. Logan Jr. and George A. Smith. (Kirtley and Logan are now deceased.)

During his term as BSE president, Anthony Harris renamed the organization the Society of Black Engineers (SBE). Encouraged by SBE's on-campus success, he also took the first steps in the creation of a national organization. He wrote a letter to the college or university presidents and deans of each of the country's 288 accredited engineering programs, explained the SBE concept and asked them to identify black student leaders, organizations and faculty members who might support the Society's efforts on a national basis. Approximately 80 schools responded. Many had similar black student organizations with similar objectives. A date was set for the first national meeting, and 48 students representing 32 schools attended the event, which was held at Purdue, April 10–12, 1975.

It was at that historic meeting, by majority vote, that SBE became the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE). The familiar NSBE "N" with lightning bolts became part of the Society's official National Symbol, representing the premier technical organization for black engineering students and professionals. NSBE was incorporated in Texas as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1976. John Cason, also of Purdue, served as the first elected president of NSBE. As the organization grew, Virginia Booth became the first female national chair of NSBE and the first national chair to serve two terms (1978–1980). The NSBE Torch, also part of the National Symbol, represents NSBE members' everlasting, burning desire to achieve success as engineers in a competitive society and positively affect the quality of life of all people. The lightning bolts represent the striking impact being felt by the society and industry as a result of the contributions and achievements made by the National Society of Black Engineers.

NSBE has grown from six to more than 24,000 members and its annual meeting has blossomed into the Annual Convention, hosting more than 14,000 attendees. NSBE has more than 600 active chapters in the U.S. and abroad. Headquartered in Alexandria, Va., NSBE offers academic excellence programs, scholarships, leadership training, professional development and access to career opportunities for thousands of members annually and provides opportunities for their success that remain unmatched by any other organization.

NSBE's mission is "to increase the number of culturally responsible Black Engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community." The main goal of the Society's current 10-year Strategic Plan is to lead the United States to produce 10,000 Black Engineers annually by 2025.

CONFERENCES

1975	The 1st NSBE National Conference is held at Purdue University.
	The 1st NSBE Camping Conference is held in San Bernardino Mountains, Calif.
1976	The 2nd Annual National Conference is held in Pomona, California; Cal State Polytechnic University.
1977	The 3rd Annual National Conference is held in Atlanta, Ga.
	The 1st Regional Conference is held by Region I at MIT.
1978	The 4th Annual National Conference is held in Columbus, Ohio.
1979	The 5th Annual National Conference is held in Philadelphia, Pa.
1980	The 1st NSBE National Technical Conference is held.
	The 6th Annual National Conference is held in Palo Alto, Calif.
1981	The 7th Annual National Conference is held in Boston, Mass.
1982	The 8th Annual National Conference is held in Detroit, Mich.
1983	The 9th Annual National Conference is held in Atlanta, Georgia
	The 1st NSBE Forum, entitled "NSBE Future," is held at the National Conference.
1984	The 10th Annual National Conference is held in Washington, D.C.
	The 1st Regional Leadership Conference is held in Region I.
1985	The 11th Annual National Conference is held in San Francisco, Calif.
1986	The 12th Annual National Conference is held in Boston, Mass.
1987	The 13th Annual National Conference is held in Dallas, Texas.
1988	The 14th Annual National Conference is held in Washington, D.C.
1989	The 1st Annual National Leadership Conference is held in Houston, Texas.
1989	The 15th Annual National Conference is held in Cincinnati, Ohio.
1990	The 16th Annual National Conference is held in Orlando, Fla.
	The 2nd Annual National Leadership Conference is held in Atlanta, Ga.
1991	NSBE sponsors the first Emerging Technologies Conference.
	The 17th Annual National Conference is held in Los Angeles, Calif.
	The 3rd Annual National Leadership Conference is held in Greensboro, N.C.
1992	The 18th Annual National Conference is held in New York City, New York, N.Y.
	The 4th Annual National Leadership Conference is held in Atlanta, Ga.

CONFERENCES (continued)

1993	The 19th Annual National Conference is held in Houston, Texas.
	The 5th Annual National Leadership Conference is held in East Lansing, Mich.
1994	The 20th Annual National Conference is held in Pittsburgh, Pa.
1995	The 21st Annual National Conference is held in Detroit, Mich.
1996	The 22nd Annual National Conference is held in Nashville, Tenn.
1997	The 23rd Annual National Conference is held in Boston, Mass.
1998	The 24th Annual National Convention is held in Anaheim, Calif.
1999	The 25th Annual National Convention is held in Kansas City, Mo.
	The 1st NSBE International Conference was held in Ghana, West Africa.
2000	The 26th Annual National Convention is held in Charlotte, N.C.
	The 2nd NSBE International Conference is held in Ghana, West Africa.
2001	The 27th Annual National Convention is held in Indianapolis, Ind.
2002	The 28th Annual National Convention is held in Orlando, Fla., and is the largest convention to date.
2003	The 29th Annual National Convention is held in Anaheim, Calif.
2004	The 30th Annual National Convention is held in Dallas, Texas.
2005	The 31st Annual National Convention is held in Boston, Mass.
2006	The 32nd Annual National Convention is held in Pittsburgh, Pa.
2007	The 33rd Annual National Convention is held in Columbus, Ohio.
2008	The 34th Annual National Convention is held in Orlando, Fla.
2009	The 35th Annual National Convention is held in Las Vegas, Nev.
2010	The 36th Annual National Convention is held in Toronto, Canada
2011	The 37th Annual National Convention will be held in St. Louis, Mo.
2012	The 38th Annual Convention is held in Pittsburgh, Pa.
2013	The 39th Annual Convention is held in Indianapolis, Ind.
2014	The 40th Annual Convention is held in Nashville, Tenn.
2015	The 41st Annual Convention is held in Anaheim, Calif.
2016	The 42nd Annual Convention is held in Boston, Mass.
2017	The 43rd Annual Convention is held in Kansas City, Mo.
2018	The 44th Annual Convention is held in Pittsburgh, Pa.
2019	The 45 th Annual Convention is held in Detroit, Mi.

PEOPLE

1971	Edward Barnette, Fred Cooper and Faculty Advisor Arthur Bond form the Black Society of Engineers, whose mission is the recruitment and retention of black engineering students.
	The “Chicago Six” — (the late) John Logan, Brian Harris, Edward Coleman, Anthony Harris, George Smith and (the late) Stan Kirtley — among several others, become the Charter Members of the Black Society of Engineers.
1974	Anthony Harris becomes President of the Society of Black Engineers; John Logan becomes Vice President; Brian Harris becomes Treasurer.
1975–76	John Cason becomes the 1st National Chairperson of the National Society of Black Engineers; though elected in 1975, he did not serve.
1976–77	William A. Johnson serves as National Chairperson.
1977–78	Richard L. Toler serves as National Chairperson.
1978–80	Virginia Booth serves as National Chair. She is the first woman to serve in the position and the first person to serve two terms.
1979	The first black woman to run for President of the United States, The Honorable Shirley Chisholm, addresses the 1979 National Conference.
1980	Dick Gregory addresses the 1980 National Conference.
1980–81	Carolyn Cooper serves as National Chairperson.
1981–82	Peter Goodeau serves as National Chairperson.
1982–84	Brian K. Sanders serves as National Chairperson.
1984–85	Karl Reid serves as National Chairperson.
1985–87	Donna O. Johnson serves as National Chairperson.
1986	The Rev. Jesse Jackson addresses the National Conference.
1987	Judge LaDoris Hazzard Cordell addresses the National Conference.
	The Rev. Dr. Florence Morehead (Executive on Loan) becomes the NSBE's 1st full-time Executive Director.
1987–89	Dr. Gary May serves as National Chairperson.
1988	Dr. Na'im Akbar addresses the National Conference.
	Robert S. Bright is the first Alumni Extension Chair.
1989	Tony Brown addresses the National Conference.
	NSBE Executive Director Florence Morehead becomes a full-time NSBE employee.
1989–91	David Fleming serves as National Chairperson.
1991–93	William Gideon Jr. serves as National Chairperson.

PEOPLE (continued)

1993	Charles Walker is appointed NSBE Executive Director.
1993-94	Kevin Harris serves as National Chairperson.
1994-95	Carl Conliffe serves as National Chairperson.
1995-97	S. Gordon Moore serves as National Chairperson.
1997-98	Regenia Sanders serves as National Chairperson.
1998-2000	André Willis serves as National Chairperson.
2000	Michele Lezama is appointed NSBE Executive Director.
2000-01	Damaune Journey serves as National Chairperson.
2002	NAACP President/CEO Kweisi Mfume delivers keynote at the 2002 National Convention Closing Event.
2001-03	Delano White serves as National Chairperson.
2003-04	Mario Church II serves as National Chairperson.
2004	Stanley Kirtley, one of NSBE's founders, passes away.
2004-06	Chanceé Lundy serves as National Chairperson.
2005	Carl Mack is appointed NSBE Executive Director.
2006-07	Ainsley A. Stewart Jr. serves as National Chairperson.
2007-08	Darryl Dickerson serves as National Chairperson.
2008-09	Stevenson A. Dunn Jr. serves as National Chairperson.
2009-10	Stacyann P. Russell serves as National Chairperson
2010-12	Calvin Phelps serves as National Chairperson
2012-13	Calvin A. Young III serves as National Chair.
2013-15	Sossena Wood serves as National Chair.
2014	Karl W. Reid, Ed.D., is appointed NSBE Executive Director.
2015-16	Neville Green serves as National Chair.
2016-18	Matthew C. Nelson serves as National Chair.
2018-19	Niasia T. Williams serves as National Chair.
2019-2021	Jocelyn Jackson serves as National Chair.

MILESTONES

1974	Anthony Harris changes the name of the Black Society of Engineers to the Society of Black Engineers. He also creates the National Symbol, composed of the NSBE Torch, lightning bolts and the initials "SBE." Harris summarized the mission in the tagline "Dedicated to a better tomorrow."
1975	At the 1st National Conference. 48 students representing 32 schools chose the new organization's national symbol, which included the letter "N," wrote a rough draft of the National Constitution, divided the organization into six geographic regions and chose the name the "National Society of Black Engineers."
	Purdue is selected as the location of NSBE's National Headquarters.
1976	NSBE is incorporated as a nonprofit organization in Austin, Texas, by Barry Barrell, Pamela Mukolu and William Johnson.
1978	NSBE begins to receive national coverage by participating in the National Academy of Science's Conference, "Minorities in Engineering"
1979	NSBE grows from 5 chapters to 88 chapters throughout the country.
	NSBE has its first National Job Fair and National Awards Banquet.
	NSBE holds a seat in the United Nations (UN) as an observer.
1982	NSBE retains the services of a black-owned management firm.
	The 1st NSBE Headquarters is established in Washington, D.C.
1983	The National Executive Board develops and implements the "zoning" concept to increase its operating effectiveness.
1984	The 1st statistical membership profile is conducted.
	The National Program Fund for regional programs is established.
1985	The National Conference grosses more than \$100,000 for the first time.
1986	NSBE publishes its first annual report.
1987	NSBE purchases its 1st World Headquarters building at 344 Commerce St., Alexandria, Va.
1988	The Board of Corporate Affiliates is established. Approximately 40 companies make up the BCA.
	NSBE National Pre-College Initiative (PCI) is launched.
	The 1st National Strategic Plan is announced.
	The NSBE Alumni Extension is formed.
1989	NSBE's budget exceeds \$1 million for the first time.
	NSBE International Committee is formed.

MILESTONES (continued)

1990	NSBE Jr. chapters are formed.
	NSBE begins the tradition of wearing African attire at the National Conference Banquet.
	NSBE membership increases to more than 7,000 students in 180 chapters.
1991	The 1st International NSBE chapter since the 1970s is chartered by McGill University.
	NSBE Academic Excellence Committee is formed.
	New World Headquarters building is established at 1454 Duke St., Alexandria, Va.
	The National Executive Board (NEB) Meeting is held at California State University, Northridge. This is the 1st NEB meeting to be held on a college campus since the mid 1980s.
1992	The 1st European NSBE chapter is founded in London, England.
	The 1st International Summit is held at World Headquarters in Alexandria, Va.
	NSBE's budget nears \$2 million.
	NSBE Academic Technical Bowl is held at the Annual National Convention in New York City.
	NSBE National Technical Symposium is held at the Annual National Convention, the 1st since the NSBE National Technical Conference in 1980.
	2nd International chapter is chartered at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad.
1995	NSBE establishes its new World Headquarters at 1454 Duke Street, Alexandria, Va.
1996	The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is named the National Chapter of the Year
1997	Texas A&M University is named the National Chapter of the Year
	Hip-Hop artist KRS-ONE performs and conducts a workshop at the Annual National Convention.
	NSBE serves as lead sponsor for National Engineers Week, the 1st minority organization to do so. The theme is "Engineers Make a World of Difference."
2004	NSBE establishes a long-term investment policy and accounts.
2005	First-ever Annual National Convention rates for International members established.
	NSBE establishes its new World Headquarters at 205 Daingerfield Road, Alexandria, Va.
2010	1st Annual Convention held internationally (Toronto, Canada)

COMMUNICATIONS

1974	<i>The Cornerstone</i> magazine/newsletter becomes the first publication of the Society of Black Engineers. Also, the first SBE resume book is published.
1978	The 1st National Charter/Membership packet is developed.
1979	The 1st NSBE videos are released.
1980	A book of the proceedings of the first NSBE National Technical Conference is published, including articles about the presented technical research.
1984	NSBE publishes its first national magazine as a conference edition titled <i>NSBENEWS</i> .
1985	NSBENET, the society's first computer network, is developed by Richard Z. White.
	The 1st Edition of the <i>NSBE Journal</i> is published.
	The 1st National Finance Handbook to aid chapters in soliciting and controlling funds is produced.
1989	NSBE publishes its own magazine under the direction of editor/publisher Norris Hite and advertising specialist Guy Mitchell.
1990	<i>NSBE Bridge</i> is published.
	<i>NSBE Journal</i> becomes <i>NSBE Magazine</i> .
1992	<i>NSBE Bridge</i> is published four times per year.
	<i>NSBE Magazine</i> is published five times per year.
1993	<i>Career Engineer</i> is published by NSBE.
???	NSBE's official website, www.nsbe.org , is launched.
2015	The MyNSBE online community is launched.
2015	NSBE establishes its Marketing and Communications Department.
2015	NSBE launches its "Be 1 of 10K" campaign, geared toward middle school students, to assist in moving the U.S. toward NSBE's goal of graduating 10,000 Black Engineers annually, with bachelor's degrees, by 2025.
2017	The NSBE Now mobile app is launched.

ABBREVIATIONS

AE	Alumni Extension
AE_x	Academic Excellence
AEB	Alumni Executive Board
AEC	Academic Excellence Committee
AEO	Alumni Executive Officers
AOG	Alumni Operating Guidelines
APC	Administrative and Personnel Committee
APEx	Academic Pyramid of Excellence
BCA	Board of Corporate Affiliates
BD	Business Diversity
CCI	Community College Initiative
CDO	Consulting Design Olympiad
CEB	Chapter Executive Board
CPC	Conference Planning Committee
DRC	Document Review Committee
FRC	Fall Regional Conference
GTA	Golden Torch Awards
IC	International Committee
ICD	Institute for Chapter Development
LRP	Long Range Plan
NAB	National Advisory Board
NEB	National Executive Board
NEO	National Executive Officers
NEW	National Engineers Week
NLC	National Leadership Conference
NLI	National Leadership Institute
PCI	Pre-College Initiative
PEB	Professionals Executive Board
PEO	Professionals Executive Officers

ABBREVIATIONS (continued)

RAB	Regional Advisory Board
RAEB	Regional Alumni Executive Board
RAOG	Regional Alumni Operating Guidelines
REB	Regional Executive Board
REO	Regional Executive Officers
RLC	Regional Leadership Conference
SEC	Standards and Ethics Committee
SEEK	Summer Engineering Experience for Kids
SRC	Spring Regional Conference
TPC	Technical Professional Conference
USTR	Undergraduate Students in Technical Research
WHQ	World Headquarters