Greetings, NSBE Professionals.

On behalf of the National and Regional Alumni Extension (AE) leadership, I welcome you to historic Indianapolis, as we host our 39th Annual Convention. Just 60 miles away, in 1971, two Purdue undergraduate students, Edward Barnette (now deceased) and Fred Cooper, approached the dean of engineering at Purdue University 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 at Purdue. In the late 1960s, a devastating 80 percent of the black freshmen entering the engineering program dropped out. The dean agreed to the idea and assigned the only black faculty member on staff, Arthur J. Bond, as advisor.

Barnett served as the first president of the BSE. The fledging group gained momentum in 1974, with the direction and encouragement of Bond and the active participation of the young 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, Logan and Arthur Bond are now deceased.

This week, as you follow the Technical Professionals Conference (TPC) track, we continue to honor this visionary past and do our part in driving our technical and global communities forward. Your current success and drive to improve upon your career are testaments to the work of the Chicago Six and their hopes for equality for minorities in predominantly white science, technology, engineering and math industries. This conference is the culmination of a yearlong effort of the National Alumni Executive Board (AEB) to provide you, our members, with the tools you requested to make your NSBE experience worthwhile. Experiences such as executive mentoring, chapter development workshops and professional certification courses have all been enhanced and extended from previous Alumni-hosted conferences — such as the AE Summit and the Professional Development Conference — in an effort to create a culture in which we, as professionals, will continue to learn and push each other to the next level of corporate and community leadership.

I implore you to take advantage of all that this TPC has to offer. Whether you are fresh out of college, an established expert in your field or the CEO of your own company, TPC Chair Nosa Egharevba and his team have planned a conference that will fit your needs as a professional. I hope your experiences here in Indianapolis will elevate your career and inspire you to attend the AE Summit (May 23–27 in Puerto Rico) and the second Joint Professional Development Conference (Fall 2013), as the AEB works on Elevating NSBE’s Professional Brand and driving NSBE forward!

Remember, YOU ARE THE MISSION!!

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