



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
February 23, 2005

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## STEDMAN GRAHAM TEAMS WITH NATIONAL BLACK MBA ASSOCIATION TO PILOT 'LOCAL EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE'

*Partnership supports business leadership at community level*

CHICAGO (February 23, 2005) – The National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) and best-selling author, educator and businessman, Stedman Graham, today announced both parties will collaborate in providing new opportunities for professional and leadership development for executives, entrepreneurs and community leaders beyond the NBMBA annual conference and into the local community.

Beginning in March 2005, the duo will launch a piloted endeavor titled 'Local Empowerment Initiative,' designed to deliver the value provided at the national level more effectively to NBMBA chapters and local communities. The three-city event, scheduled for launch in Atlanta on March 31<sup>st</sup> at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, will include discussions from regional business and civic leaders about trends and new opportunities for executives and entrepreneurs of color. Atlanta was also selected as the host city for the NBMBA 2006 Annual Conference & Exposition. Other participating cities in the Local Empowerment Initiative this year include St. Louis on May 19<sup>th</sup> and Jacksonville, Florida on December 1, 2005. Additional events for the three pilot markets will include an executive panel discussion, job fair, workshops and networking events.

"The National Black MBA Association has always made a difference in careers and lives of our members through our national conference and our local chapter activities," said Barbara Thomas, President and CEO of NBMBA. "Through local empowerment in Atlanta, St. Louis and Jacksonville, we are introducing how we can combine our strengths from all levels within our association to reach more individuals and organizations that can benefit from the unique insights, training and opportunities we offer."

Established under the auspices of the newly formed NBMBA Local Empowerment Initiative, this year's events are part of the NBMBA's status as a champion of leadership development and involvement with the communities from which its membership is drawn.

"Today, the National Black MBA Association is a champion of offering valuable professional networking opportunities to African Americans right where these critical resources belong: in communities

-more-

around the United States,” said Alvin Brown, Chairman of NBMBA. “Joining forces with Stedman Graham, we are proud to offer the best practices available in both education and in business. This partnership will further strengthen the workforce from recruitment through retirement.”

As part of the Local Empowerment Initiative, Stedman Graham will conduct an in-depth workshop based on the success process teachings outlined in his *New York Times*® bestseller, *You Can Make It Happen: A Nine-Step Plan For Success*,” and “*Diversity: Leaders Not Labels*,” scheduled for release in 2005.

The workshop will include strategies that help strengthen personal and professional development through leadership and entrepreneurship, and provide a unique approach to establishing one’s position in the marketplace by integrating business growth, networks and community relationships.

“I am very excited to partner with the National Black MBA Association in support of the Local Empowerment Initiative,” said Graham, who serves as chairman and CEO of S. Graham & Associates, a Chicago-based management and marketing firm specializing in corporate and education consulting. “The landscape in the marketplace is changing and I believe it is important that we continue to explore opportunities to help people of color grasp a better understanding of business and how the free enterprise system works in order to compete.”

Graham will also address NBMBA Leaders of Tomorrow high school students at the St. Louis Chapter for a *Leaders Make It Happen* digital media project based on his education program and *New York Times*® Bestseller, *Teens Can Make It Happen: A Nine Step Plan For Success*.

#### FIND OUT MORE

For ticket information and to learn more about NBMBA membership and services, including NBMBA Career Success Network™, NBMBA Employment Network™, Leaders of Tomorrow, and the NBMBA Leadership Institute, visit [www.nbmba.org](http://www.nbmba.org).

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