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## **National Black MBA Association Announces Elite Networking Program for CEOs and Execs**

**Chicago (May 31, 2006)** – The National Black MBA Association ([www.NBMBAA.org](http://www.NBMBAA.org)), the nation’s preeminent organization for black business professionals, announced today the launch of its new Gold Key Access, a program that provides African American executives with exclusive access to private networking events and special career advancement opportunities.

“We’re very excited to offer this unique opportunity to our CEO and executive members,” said NBMBAA President and CEO Barbara Thomas. “Our Gold Key Access program will give them unparalleled access to other CEOs and executives at intimate events and power networking sessions.”

The NBMBAA created Gold Key Access in response to the growing number of African American CEOs and executives in corporate America who were seeking access to other business elites. Executives are matched with the NBMBAA’s most selective corporate partners - who include Citigroup, IBM and Verizon. Open to executives at the director level and above who earn more than \$150,000 in direct compensation, the program is expected to attract leaders from the arenas of business, finance, and government affairs. Prospective members may sign up for Gold Key Access at [www.NBMBAA.org](http://www.NBMBAA.org).

In addition to Gold Key Access, other signature NBMBAA career development offerings include Ntential, an online career coaching initiative that combines coaching with a state-of-the-art online tool to assist individuals navigate the workplace from entry-level through retirement. Another offering is the Candidates for Success, an executive coaching seminar offered during the group’s annual conference to be held in Atlanta this September.

An expected 13,000 attendees are scheduled to attend the NBMBAA’s 28th Annual Conference & Exposition in Atlanta September 26<sup>th</sup> - October 1<sup>st</sup>. Last year’s conference featured one of the country’s largest career fairs with more than 300 *Fortune 500* in attendance. The annual conference offers participants job matching and networking opportunities, a series of professional development workshops as well as on-site career coaching.

Celebrating its 36th year, the NMBBAA has more than 6,000 members and represents more than 100,000 black MBA graduates. Aimed at creating partnerships resulting in increased intellectual wealth and economic vitality in the black community, the organization focuses on education, employment and entrepreneurship. NMBBAA continues to form strategic partnerships with the country's leading *Fortune 500* companies, business corporations, organizations, universities and colleges.

In addition to the conference, the NMBBAA also produces the Local Empowerment Initiative (LEI) a professional seminar that travels to different parts of the country. The most recent LEI featured best-selling author Stedman Graham in Dallas this past March. The LEI included a career fair, free GMAT preparation courses as well as the awarding of \$22,000 in grants to students from the Dallas area who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina through the organization's Student Empowerment Relief Fund (SERF). The NMBBAA has contributed more than \$90,000 to SERF since its inception in September 2005.

*Ebony*, the country's leading African American-themed periodical, recently named Thomas as one its 100 Most Influential Black Americans.

#### **About the NMBBAA**

Established in 1970, the National Black MBA Association is dedicated to creating partnerships that result in increased intellectual and economic wealth in the black community through education, employment and entrepreneurship. With more than 6,000 members representing 100,000 MBA graduates in 39 chapters around the country, the NMBBAA has strategic partnerships with more than 400 of the country's top business corporations, organizations, universities and colleges. The group's 2006 annual conference and career fair, the nation's largest employment and networking event, will be held in Atlanta, September 26th through October 1st.

For more information about Gold Key Access, please contact Audrey Pinn at 202.466.7717 or [audrey@westinrinehart.com](mailto:audrey@westinrinehart.com).

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