

The Most Powerful African Americans In Corporate America



Meet 75 executives who hold tremendous clout in the world of business,





including the 18 who earned CEO positions

By Kenneth Meeks



—Additional reporting by Patrice D. Johnson, Carolyn M. Brown, Nkechi I. Olisemeka, Jamila Farwell, Hyacinth Carbon & Tykisha Lundy

CONSIDER THEM THE CORPORATE ELITE—an exclusive club of high-powered black executives who determine the billion-dollar bottom lines and market values of the world's largest corporations.

Just who are these dynamos? **BLACKENTERPRISE**'s Most Powerful Blacks in Corporate America. These 75 men and women represent the highest-ranking executives from the 1,000 largest domestic and international corporations publicly traded on U.S. equities markets. All are either within striking distance of the CEO's chair or operate a major revenue-generating subsidiary or unit. Most manage thousands of employees and control billion-dollar budgets. (See box for selection criteria.)

For 17 years, **BE** has identified members of this exclusive club. In 1988, our first list of the 25 Hottest Corporate Managers was devoid of black chief executives. In 1993, among the 40 African Americans we found at the top tier, there were 12 presidents and two CEOs: Richard D. Parsons, then the CEO of Dime Savings Bank of New York, and Clifton R. Wharton Jr., CEO of TIAA-CREF and the first African American to head one of the 1,000 largest publicly held corporations. On our 2000 list of the Top 50 Blacks in Corporate America, the number of black CEOs grew to six. On this year's register, the number of African Americans who broke into the CEO ranks has risen to 18—a phenomenal 300% increase—with 26 presidents waiting in the wings.

Their stock as leaders is almost as valuable as their company's market value. Take E. Stanley O'Neal, CEO of Merrill Lynch & Co. since 2003. He transformed a stagnant financial services monolith with gargantuan debt and bloated overhead into a lean profit machine. With a laser beam focus and ruthless cost-cutting, O'Neal boosted Merrill Lynch's share price from its nadir of \$36.25 to \$64.89—a whopping 79% increase.

Other corporate chieftains have worked similar magic. John W. Thompson, CEO of Symantec, was named **BE**'s 2004 Executive of the Year for good reason. Company shares more than doubled in the past year, giving the computer software juggernaut a market value of nearly \$19 billion. And over the past few years, others such as American Express CEO Kenneth I. Chenault and Time Warner

CEO Richard D. Parsons have produced ample shareholder value and revenue growth in the face of brutal competition, market volatility, and the economic malaise that followed 9-11. Observers await the performance of newcomers like Clarence Otis, CEO of the \$4.6 billion Darden Restaurants, and Alwyn Lewis, president of the \$55 billion Sears Holdings Corp.

Recently, a number of executives have been wrestling with major challenges or structuring colossal deals. For example, at press time, Fannie Mae CEO Franklin D. Raines, who had to contend with federal regulators investigating the \$53.8 billion mortgage company's accounting and management practices, was in danger of losing his job. Oracle Co-president Charles Phillips Jr. recently closed a \$10.3 billion merger with PeopleSoft Inc., and high-tech deal maker Thompson orchestrated Symantec's \$13.5 billion bid for VERITAS Software.

This year's list reveals more women at the top. For example, Young & Rubicam Brands CEO Ann M. Fudge represents one of three female chief executives. "I think African American women have met the challenges of corporate America," she says, "and absolutely there is no doubt that there will be an African American woman running a Fortune 500 company. It's going to happen."

Despite a corporate environment that is often inhospitable to black professionals, these top execs say the number of blacks residing in corner offices will continue to grow. "I think it's extremely positive that we have a number of African American CEOs, presidents, and chief operating officers of major corporations as effective role models," says Ronald A. Williams, president of the \$17.9 billion Aetna Inc. "And it helps organizations focus on becoming more of a [meritocracy], where people can be judged on the basis of the value they create and not on the basis of their race or ethnicity."

Paula Madison, president and general manager of Los Angeles-based KNBC and regional manager for two Telemundo stations, sums up her philosophy of the advancement of blacks, particularly women, quite simply: "The important thing is to continue getting us into the pipeline and have us positioned so that as more executive positions become available, we're poised and ready to take advantage of the opportunities."

To develop this year's list, our research team spent several months contacting the 1,000 largest publicly traded companies, international corporations, and leading professional associations. Our team pored over corporate documents and performed comprehensive research to identify candidates and review their credentials. Those featured on our list met the following criteria:

- Each candidate had to be among the highest-ranking executives within his or her corporation. These men and women are either on the CEO track, run a major division that makes a significant contribution to the company's revenues, or serve as officers on their company's executive committees.

- Each executive holds a senior management position at a publicly traded company or international corporation with gross revenues of at least \$1 billion.

- Each of the executives has revenue-generating or operating responsibilities, or holds a position critical to product development and the bottom line. None of the top executives have primary responsibility for staff

Selection Criteria

functions in areas such as public affairs, human resources, or diversity.

- Each person on our list has achieved the status of chief executive, president,

ident, general manager, executive vice president, senior vice president, or another top-ranking position with significant management responsibility and budget authority. Those executives holding the position of general counsel within their corporation were excluded from this list.

- Each reports to the CEO, office of the CEO/chairman, COO, or the company's board of directors.

- Each has had significant influence in his or her company and industry.

Chief Executive Officers

Kenneth I. Chenault
Chairman & CEO
American Express

Age: 53

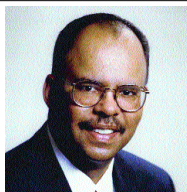
Chenault has been running the executive management team of this \$25.9 billion financial and travel services giant since early 2001. He recently oversaw a deal with credit card issuer MBNA Corp. to offer consumers American Express-branded credit cards. It was the first deal between American Express and a U.S. financial institution. Company stock was \$55.68 a share just before the 2004 holiday season and had reached a 52-week high of \$56.60 just a few weeks prior. The New York native and Harvard Law School graduate was also behind the landmark deal with Citibank to issue co-branded credit cards throughout the U.S. starting this year. In 2002, Chenault was listed as one of the 10 highest-paid executives in New York City.



Erroll B. Davis Jr.
Chairman & CEO
Alliant Energy

Age: 60

Davis heads a \$3.1 billion energy services provider that serves more than 3 million customers worldwide. His tenure appears to be going well: The company's stock price was at a 52-week high of \$27.64 at the end of 2004. Davis holds an engineering degree from Carnegie Mellon University and an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago. He was first employed at Alliant Energy's predecessor, Wisconsin Power and Light Co. In 1998, he took the helm of Alliant, a company that provides its Midwest customers with electricity and natural gas. Other key parts of the business include the international energy market and nonregulated domestic energy generation. Davis is a member of the advisory board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago.



Reginald E. Davis
CEO, Atlantic Region
Wachovia

Age: 43

This graduate of Morehouse College joined Wachovia in 1985 and has held a number of positions in the company, primarily in commercial real estate. As head of the Atlantic region for the fourth largest bank in the country, Davis provides executive leadership to all retail, commercial, and small business bank operations in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In 2004, Wachovia, which has \$24.5 billion in overall revenues, split the management of its retail bank operations, dividing it into northern and southern groups. Davis' region stretches as far south as to South Carolina. Wachovia services more than 14 million households and businesses through some 3,200 financial centers and retail brokerage firms. Davis is a believer in mentoring and supports various programs at his alma mater.



W. H. "Bill" Easter III
Chairman, CEO & President
Duke Energy Field Services

Age: 55

Easter helped turn Duke Energy Field Services, a 2003 venture between Duke Energy and ConocoPhillips, into a \$7.8 billion giant. The merger created one of the largest natural gas distribution companies in the country. Duke Energy Field Services is the country's leading natural gas liquids marketers. The Denver-based firm has more than 2,500 employees. Last year, *ColoradoBiz* magazine named it the top company in the state for improving its operational efficiency. Easter, who joined Conoco in 1971, has had a 30-year career with the company in the areas of natural gas supply and marketing, energy transportation and refining, and petroleum marketing. He has served as a company division manager, general manager, managing director, and CEO of Conoco Jet Nordic in Stockholm, Sweden.



Arthur "Art" H. Harper
CEO & President
GE Equipment Services

Age: 49

Harper is at the helm of this \$4.7 billion GE subsidiary, one of four separate divisions that were formed when GE Capital split in 2002. He assumes full responsibility for the entire operation and financial results of GE Plastics Europe, Middle East, India, and Africa. He also oversees GE SeaCo, a 50/50 joint venture between GE and Sea Containers, one of the world's largest lessors of marine containers. Harper has been charged by GE's CEO, Jeff Immelt, to lead the task of turning around the equipment management business, which is facing tough market challenges. Harper is a member of GE's corporate executive council. Prior to his current position, he was an executive vice president and a member of the CEO's office at GE Capital. He joined GE Plastics in 1984 as a market development specialist and also worked as an aerospace specialist.



Carl Horton
CEO & President
The Absolut Spirit Company Inc.

Age: 60

Horton oversees the North American operations of the United States' third largest distilled spirits brand. Under his leadership, Absolut's business grew in 2003: it sold 4.5 million cases of vodka in the U.S. Horton spearheads Absolut's worldwide strategic marketing initiatives and serves on a multinational management team for the brand's parent company, Sweden-based V&S Group. Prior to his present position, Horton joined Pernod Ricard in 1980 and worked with the Seagram brand. He held positions of increasing responsibility for Seagram's Gin, Captain Morgan, Seagram's 7 Crown, and Seagram's VO. Each brand experienced significant market share growth under his leadership. Prior to Seagram's, Horton held key executive positions at General Foods, Xerox Corp., and Heublein.



Ann M. Fudge Chairman & CEO **Young & Rubicam Brands, a subsidiary of WPP**

Age: 52 Location: New York

In an industry that focuses on big accounts, great slogans, and advertising awards, Fudge may seem somewhat of a misfit. She is not your typical advertising executive—in background or ideology. Since being named chairman and CEO of WPP’s marketing and communications giant in May 2003, Fudge hasn’t emphasized new business or creative savvy. As a result, she has had to fight speculation and doubt as well as a creative culture concentrated on conquests. Fudge has been steadfastly focused on strengthening the company, which has 540 offices in 80 countries, to function as one multifaceted organization—renaming the company Young & Rubicam Brands to make her point. This move speaks to Fudge’s efforts to create a company that can offer holistic marketing solutions to satisfy the needs of a client looking to enhance brand awareness. Why is the client so important? She used to be one. The former president of the \$5 billion Kraft unit for the beverages, desserts, and Post cereals division, made her name in the consumer packaged goods industry, reviving product brands that included Minute Rice, Maxwell House, and Stove Top. “It’s about pushing for more,” says Fudge. “I think what I’ve accomplished in the first 18 months has been very stabilizing, getting growth again, which we have accomplished from a profit standpoint.” Right now, Fudge is laying the foundation for growth. “Sustainable change takes at least three to five years.”

—Sonia Alleyne



Alwyn Lewis
CEO, Sears Retail
President, Sears Holdings

Age: 50

When Kmart Holding Corp. merged with Sears Holdings in November 2004, Lewis became the No. 3 man in the company and CEO of Sears Retail. A month earlier, Lewis had been appointed CEO of Kmart, the \$26 billion retail company and employer of more than 200,000. The merger is expected to create the third largest retailer in the country, generating an estimated \$55 billion in annual revenues. Lewis’ stock as a corporate executive is skyrocketing. He was recruited from YUM! Brands, where he was president and chief multibranding and operating officer. The Texas native has been a corporate executive for 26 years. Lewis, who received dual bachelor’s degrees in business management and English literature as well as an M.B.A. from the University of Houston, first cut his teeth as a district manager of operations with the Jack in the Box restaurant chain.



Renetta McCann
CEO
Starcom Americas

Age: 46

McCann supervises the largest unit of Starcom MediaVest Group, a subsidiary of French media company Publicis, and one of the world’s leading media agencies. Her division operates in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. McCann is responsible for four media brands—Starcom, MediaVest, GM Planworks, and StarLink. Some of her greatest accomplishments include doubling her staff to a total of more than 600 and snagging the Walt Disney World account, which was worth \$600 million. In 2000, McCann was credited with empowering her staff to perform so well that Starcom North America had two consecutive years of 20% growth. Two years ago, under her leadership, Starcom boasted \$4.6 billion in billings. The Chicago native’s team of employees maintains the lowest turnover rate in the industry—a testament to her ability to grow talent.



E. Stanley O’Neal
Chairman, CEO & President
Merrill Lynch & Co.

Age: 53

O’Neal is the top executive for the \$27.7 billion financial services superpower. He was given the mandate to increase the company’s profit margin and stock price when he became president in 2001 and went on to preside over one of the most dramatic restructurings of any Wall Street firm. More than 23,000 jobs were eliminated, including 19 senior executive positions. In 2003, his compensation was doubled from \$14.39 million to \$28.14 million, a reflection of Merrill Lynch’s improved performance, which included a 55% rise in its stock price. O’Neal launched his career at a GM assembly plant, graduating from the General Motors Institute and winning a scholarship to Harvard Business School, where he obtained his M.B.A. He joined Merrill Lynch in 1986 and was one of BE’s Top African Americans on Wall Street in 2002.



Dan Packer
CEO & President
Entergy New Orleans

Age: 57

Packer is the first African American in the country to manage a nuclear plant. He develops Entergy's strategic plan and is responsible for the overall financial profitability and operational success of the utility. Packer oversees customer service, product distribution, transmission, and generation. Entergy New Orleans, a division of Entergy Corp., employs 2,500 city residents and serves 190,000 electric customers and 147,000 gas customers. Prior to joining Entergy, Packer was a senior engineer with General Physics Corp. and served in the U.S. Nuclear Navy Program. The Tulane University M.B.A. graduate is also licensed by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He currently serves on the boards of organizations such as the UNO Business of Higher Education Council and Bureau of Government Research.



Richard D. Parsons
Chairman & CEO
Time Warner

Age: 55

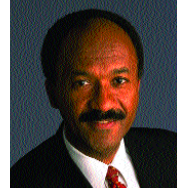
Parsons continues to surprise investors with his ability to make a profitable entertainment giant out of the worst merger in the history of corporate America—Time Warner's marriage to America Online in 2001. He oversees the executive management team of the \$43.9 billion company, the world's largest media conglomerate. Time Warner stock hovered around \$18 in late 2004, but Parsons says it's only because of concerns about competition in the cable industry. The company's other businesses, which include film, interactive services, television networks, cable systems, and publishing are strong performers. Parsons has devised a three-pronged strategy to expand the company's franchises: continue to cultivate properties such as Harry Potter, advance technology in areas such as interactive TV and downloadable music.



Franklin D. Raines
Chairman & CEO
Fannie Mae

Age: 55

The \$53.8 billion mortgage financing company has had its share of trouble—it was the subject of congressional hearings last year and an ongoing Securities and Exchange Commission investigation—but there's no doubting the leadership ability of its CEO. Operating under federal charter, Fannie Mae is the largest nonbank financial services company in the world. Raines has led the company through continuous double-digit operating income growth and has made a commitment to invest \$2 trillion toward financing affordable housing for 18 million families. Raines describes Fannie Mae as a company that helps millions of Americans purchase homes. As Raines seeks to push forward his agenda at Fannie Mae, his track record communicates success: As director of the office of management and budget under Clinton, he helped create the first federal budget surplus in modern history.



Pamela Thomas-Graham
CEO & President, CNBC
Executive Vice President, NBC

Age: 41

Thomas-Graham, the highest ranking African American in the ultra-competitive cable news industry, continues to prove she's worth her weight in gold. In July 2001, she was appointed president and CEO of CNBC, the 24-hour news channel owned by NBC and affiliated with Dow Jones, which generated more than \$500 million in revenues. Over the past two years, Thomas-Graham has shifted the network's focus away from the stock market and toward analysis of current events and talk shows with high-profile hosts. As a result, it has begun to turn a profit on par with its performance before the dot-com bust and 9-11. A triple Harvard University degree holder (B.A., M.B.A., J.D.), Thomas-Graham, has been breaking new ground throughout her career. She became the first black woman and the youngest ever to make partner at the world-class management consulting firm McKinsey & Co.



John W. Thompson
Chairman & CEO
Symantec Corp.

Age: 55

Thompson became CEO of Symantec in 1999 and turned it into the country's largest maker of security software. Once a producer of tools and utilities for Windows PCs, Symantec is now a \$1.4 billion company that employs more than 4,300 people. Thompson's lucrative deals—including the recent \$13.5 billion acquisition of VERITAS Software—have made Symantec one of the most valuable software companies in the world and earned him recognition as **BE's** 2004 Executive of the Year. Prior to joining Symantec, the Florida A&M University and MIT Sloan School of Management graduate had a distinguished career with IBM, where he held senior executive positions in sales, marketing, and software development. Since joining Symantec, Thompson has further developed its best known product, Norton AntiVirus.



Lloyd G. Trotter
CEO & President
GE Consumer and Industrial

Age: 59

Trotter heads a \$13 billion GE subsidiary that employs 75,000 people in 150 locations worldwide. One of GE's 11 major businesses, the company was formed in 2004 when GE Industrial Systems merged with GE Consumer Products. GE Consumer and Industrial is an industry leader in major appliances, lighting products, and integrated industrial equipment and systems. Trotter became president and CEO of GE Industrial Systems in 1998 and was instrumental in strengthening the company's foothold in international markets and expanding its product scope. He began his career in 1970 as a field service engineer with GE Lighting and assumed his current position in 2003. He also serves as chairman of the National Electrical Manufacturers Association's Board of Governors and is a member of the board of the National Association of Manufacturers. ▶



Clarence Otis Jr. CEO, Darden Restaurants

Age: 48 Location: Orlando, FL

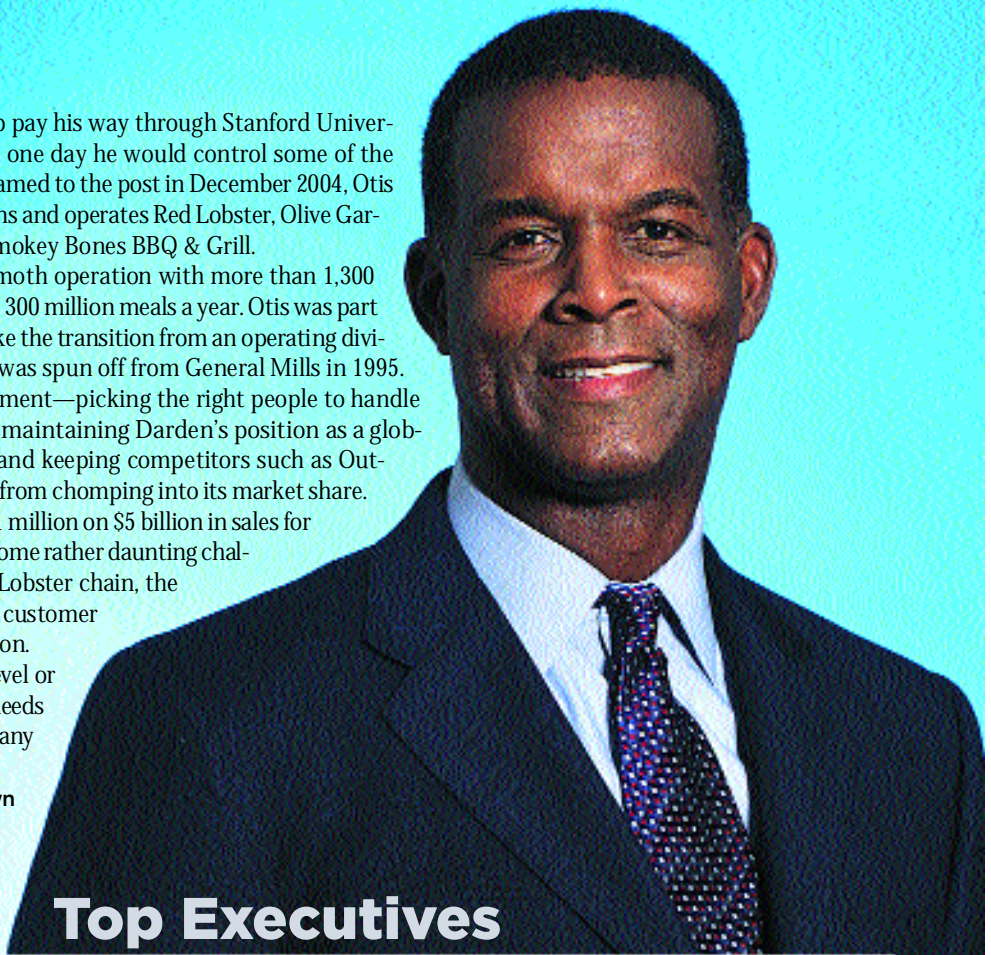
When Otis worked as a waiter to help pay his way through Stanford University Law School, little did he know that one day he would control some of the largest restaurant chains in the world. Named to the post in December 2004, Otis is CEO of Darden Restaurants, which owns and operates Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Seasons 52, Bahama Breeze, and Smokey Bones BBQ & Grill.

The seasoned executive runs a mammoth operation with more than 1,300 outlets and 140,000 employees who serve 300 million meals a year. Otis was part of the leadership that helped Darden make the transition from an operating division to a stand-alone company when it was spun off from General Mills in 1995. He says his job is one of talent management—picking the right people to handle details. Otis focuses on the big picture: maintaining Darden's position as a global leader in the casual dining industry and keeping competitors such as Outback Steakhouse, Applebee's, and Chili's from chomping into its market share.

Despite earning a mouthwatering \$231 million on \$5 billion in sales for fiscal year 2004, Otis must contend with some rather daunting challenges—like the turnaround of the Red Lobster chain, the 681-unit flagship that has failed to meet customer expectations in service and menu selection.

He says, "No matter what a person's level or function is within a company, he or she needs to understand the basics—how that company makes money."

—Carolyn M. Brown



Top Executives

R.L. "Bob" Wood
Chairman, CEO & President
Crompton Corp.

Age: 50

Wood took the helm at Crompton in January 2004 and became the first African American CEO of a major U.S. chemical firm. With annual sales of \$2.2 billion, Crompton is a leading producer of polymers, polymer additives, and polymer processing equipment. It is also one of the world's largest specialty chemical companies. Prior to joining Crompton, Wood served as business group president for Dow Automotive, a \$5.5 billion business that produced polyurethane and other chemicals. In 1997, he was named business vice president of polyurethane production at Crompton, a post that awarded him global management responsibility for the multibillion-dollar business. He serves on the boards of Jarden Corp. and Praxair Inc.



Quincy L. Allen
President, Production Systems Group
Xerox Corp.

Age: 44

Driving productivity and putting clients first have been the hallmark of Allen's career that began at Xerox in 1982, when he joined the company as an electrical engineer. In 1999, he was appointed vice president of worldwide customer services strategy. And in 2001, he became senior vice president of North American Services and Solutions. Allen was named to his current position in October 2004 and is responsible for the company's high-end systems software. He is also responsible for service offerings to the graphic communications industry, including production publishing, transaction printing, and enterprise-wide printing—a \$4.5 billion business for the company. Allen also manages the worldwide development and marketing of color and monochrome systems.



Paget L. Alves
President, Sprint Business Solutions
Sprint Corp.

Age: 47

Alves is responsible for the SBS strategic segment, which concentrates on Sprint's 100 largest business customers, systems integrators, international customers, access and wholesale carriers, and cable ventures. Between 1996 and 2000, Alves held several senior management positions with Sprint. He served as president of sales and support for the Business Services Group, where he was responsible for all business and government customers of Sprint's long-distance division. He left Sprint briefly in June 2000 to become president and chief executive officer of PointOne Telecommunications, an Internet-telephony services provider located in Austin, Texas. Alves assumed his current position in November 2003. He also appeared on **BE's** 2000 list of The Top 50 Blacks in Corporate America. ▶



Brian P. Anderson
CFO & Executive Vice President of Finance
OfficeMax Inc.

Age: 53

A corporate finance maven, Anderson has a key leadership role in the corporate strategies and execution of the \$8.2 billion business. In 2003, Boise Cascade purchased OfficeMax supply superstores. Then in October 2004, the company sold off \$3.7 billion worth of its paper, forest products, and timberlands assets, creating a new company called OfficeMax Inc. Prior to joining the company, Anderson was senior vice president and CFO of Baxter International. Now Anderson helps OfficeMax develop strategies that will grow market share and fend off competitors such as Staples and Comp USA. The CPA holds an M.B.A. from Indiana University and sits on the board of directors of WW Grainger, where he chairs its audit committee. Anderson was the inaugural recipient of the chief financial officer of the year award from the Chicago chapter of the National Investor Relations Institute.

D. Steve Boland
President & Managing Director, LandSafe Inc.
Countrywide Financial Corp.

Age: 36

A 15-year veteran of the mortgage banking industry, Boland joined Countrywide in 1997 as first vice president and director of Fair Lending and House America. In 1998, he was promoted to regional vice president in the consumer markets division. The following year, LandSafe Inc. became a new subsidiary of the company, offering a full range of real estate information and closing services to its parent company and lenders nationwide. Today, Boland is president and managing director of its four business units, a position he assumed in April 2004. In 2001, LandSafe hit revenues of \$129 million. Boland, who holds a bachelor's from Northwestern University, was the former vice president and national director of the affordable lending division for Fleet Mortgage Group.



James A. Bell
Chief Financial Officer
Boeing

Age: 55

Since January 2004, Bell has been the top numbers man at the \$54 billion aerospace and defense company. A 32-year veteran of corporate finance, Bell came to Boeing when the company purchased Rockwell International Corp.'s aerospace and defense units in 1996. He joined Rockwell as an accountant in 1972 and climbed the ladder to executive positions in auditing, program management, and finance. After Rockwell was acquired, Bell became vice president of contracts and pricing at former Rockwell units in Southern California. In 2000, he was named senior vice president of finance and corporate controller, the No. 2 financial management position. He's proven himself a skilled manager who has intimate knowledge of Boeing's strategy.



Thomas K. "Tony" Brown
Senior Vice President, Global Purchasing
Ford Motor Co.

Age: 48

Brown is responsible for more than \$90 billion of production and nonproduction procurement worldwide for all eight of Ford's automobile brands (Ford, Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mercury, Aston Martin, and Mazda). Since joining Ford in 1999, Brown has held various positions, including executive director for manufacturing procurement operations. Ford spent \$3.2 billion in 2003 on products and services from minority-owned suppliers. During his tenure, Brown has sought to push that number higher each year. Prior to joining Ford, he was vice president of supply management at United Technologies Automotive, after having served as executive director of corporate purchasing and transportation for QMS Inc., a maker and provider of network enterprise printing solutions.



Y. Marc Belton
Sr. VP Yoplait, GMI Canada & New Business Dev.
General Mills

Age: 45

Keeping Yoplait one of the leading brands of yogurt in the U.S. is just one of Belton's jobs. He currently oversees four business units, including Yoplait-Colombo, General Mills Canada, Small Planet Foods, and 8th Continent (a soy milk product), which is General Mills' joint venture with DuPont. The Wharton M.B.A. graduate works closely with top management, developing new business initiatives. Before he became senior vice president, Belton held other top posts in other divisions in the company, such as the snacks division and new ventures. Prior to that he was president of Big G; he ran the company's \$2.3 billion cereal business, which includes popular household brands such as Wheaties, Cheerios, and Trix. Belton is a member of the Executive Leadership Council.



Ursula M. Burns
President, Business Group Operations & Sr. VP
Xerox Corp.

Age: 46

Burns joined Xerox as a mechanical engineering intern in the summer of 1980, and subsequently held several engineering positions in product planning and development. In 1990, she changed gears to become executive assistant to then-Chairman Paul A. Allaire. She has since led several teams including the office network copying business and the departmental business unit. Today, she is a corporate senior vice president at Xerox and president of business group operations. She also heads a \$12 billion division that consists of five major operations: production, office, worldwide manufacturing and supply chain, information management, and the Xerox engineering center. Burns holds a master's from Columbia University and serves on a number of corporate boards.



Donna A. James President, **Nationwide Strategic Investments**

Age: 47 Location: Columbus, OH

From Columbus, Ohio, to São Paulo, Brazil, Donna James is on your side—that is, if you're one of her millions of clients. As president of the strategic investments division, James provides products and services that enable people to purchase homes, invest for retirement, and finance enterprises.

James and her team manage five subsidiaries for the \$16.8 billion insurer. These entities generate about \$650 million in annual revenues and employ roughly 2,100 people. "We focus on innovations outside of the core businesses," maintains James. "My job is to find new growth opportunities in financial services that are related to, but can be different from, what we do today."

Also focusing on small business development, she's responsible for a portfolio of financial companies in mid- to late-stage development through Nationwide Mutual Capital, a \$150 million venture capital fund. James also serves as a member of corporate executive management.

Holding a bachelor's degree in accounting from North Carolina A&T State University, James previously worked as an auditor with Coopers & Lybrand and as an HMO accounting specialist at Nationwide, which gave her entrance into the insurance business.

James says her philosophy for success is the same in business as it is in her personal life: stay focused on doing what's right in any given situation and don't get caught up in emotion and politics.

—Patrice D. Johnson



Frank M. Clark

President, ComEd; Exec. VP & Chief of Staff,
Exelon Corp.

Age: 59

After joining ComEd in 1966, Clark literally worked his way up the ranks. This Vietnam vet began his career at the Illinois electric company as a mailroom clerk and has since been responsible for leading several divisions within the company, including customer services operations, marketing and sales, energy acquisition, and distribution pricing. Today, as chief of staff for Exelon, Clark is accountable to the chairman and CEO on companywide legislative matters and regulatory strategies for a company that generated \$15.8 billion in 2003. As president of ComEd, he oversees day-to-day operations of the company, which provides electricity for 3.6 million customers throughout northern Illinois. ComEd has 6,000 employees and revenues of \$6.3 billion.



Virgjis W. Colbert

Exec. VP, Worldwide Operations
Miller Brewing Co.

Age: 65

Colbert told the authors of *Cracking the Corporate Code: The Revealing Success Stories of 32 African-American Executives* that he felt he'd been pigeonholed as a "black manager" at Chrysler, where he was general superintendent of manufacturing. His decision to become assistant to the plant manager at one of Miller's North Carolina facilities in 1979 paid off. He now manages 7,000 employees in its multibillion-dollar plant operation, which includes brewing, research, quality assurance, engineering, purchasing, and information systems. He's also involved with Miller's corporate operations planning and improvement. Miller's South Africa-based parent company, SABMiller plc, is one of the world's largest brewers with \$8 billion in sales in 2003.



Samuel Combs III

President & COO
Oklahoma Natural Gas Co.

Age: 47

Combs heads the \$1 billion natural gas distribution division of Tulsa-based ONEOK, which generated \$3.9 billion at the end of a nine-month period in September 2004; revenues grew 58%. ONG is the largest natural gas utility in the state of Oklahoma, serving 80% of the state's citizens. During his 19-year tenure with the company, Combs has held numerous engineering and management positions. He became vice president of the Western region in 1996 and was named president and chief operating officer in 2001. Prior to joining ONG in 1984, Combs spent five years as a manager in the telecommunications industry. He also serves on several corporate boards.



Martin Davis
Executive Vice President & CIO
Wachovia, Atlantic Region

Age: 41

Davis is a leader in information technology at Wachovia, a business services company with \$401 billion in assets and a market cap of \$61 billion. Wachovia is one of the largest providers of financial services to retail, brokerage, and corporate customers throughout the East Coast and the world. Davis handles the technology for all of Wachovia's businesses, covering a range of bank offerings, complete brokerage services, asset management, wealth management, and innovative products for corporate and individual customers. More than 9 million households and 900,000 business customers are acquainted with Wachovia Bank, Wachovia Securities, and Wachovia Mortgage brand names. A graduate of the Young Executive Institute and the Executive Leadership Program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Davis is accountable for all strategic, employee, and business processes.



Steve Davis
President & COO, Long John Silver's
President, Multibranding YUM! Brands

Age: 46

As president and COO, Davis oversees company and franchise operations, leadership, and marketing for the Long John Silver's brand, a quick-service seafood chain with more than 1,200 restaurants worldwide. A seasoned restaurant executive with strong operational and marketing skills, Davis joined Pizza Hut, a YUM! Brands company, in 1993 and rose to senior vice president of concept development. On Oct. 18, 2004, Davis took on added responsibilities for the company's 2,600 multibrand restaurant operations worldwide. Multibranding accounted for approximately 12% of the company's traditional restaurant base in the U.S. and generated almost \$185 million in U.S. company store profits and franchise fees in 2003. YUM! Brands, with more than 33,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries, saw revenues of \$8.4 billion in 2004.



Jerri DeVard
Sr. VP, Brand Management & Marketing Comm.
Verizon Communications Inc.

Age: 45

Since January of 2003, DeVard has been responsible for leading all corporate initiatives to build and strengthen the Verizon brand worldwide. She also manages advertising, media planning and buying, and direct mail response for the company's Domestic Telecom group. Verizon had revenues of \$67.8 billion in 2003. Prior to joining Verizon, DeVard was chief marketing officer at Citigroup, responsible for the e-consumer line of business. She also held other positions in customer acquisition and new business development. Before joining Citigroup, she was vice president of marketing for color cosmetics at Revlon, vice president of marketing for Harrah's Entertainment in New Orleans, and she held several brand management positions at the Pillsbury Co. in Minneapolis.



Monte Ford
Sr. VP & CIO, American Airlines
AMR Corp.

Age: 45

Ford was recruited in 2000 with orders to rebuild the information technology department for the \$17.4 billion airline. The senior executive is responsible for information systems organization, all Internet activities, and operations research at the world's largest carrier, with 3,900 daily flights. Central to American Airlines' reinvention since 9-11, Ford's department has an annual operating budget of \$158 million through 2007. Prior to working for American Airlines, the Northeastern University graduate served as executive vice president and chief information officer for The Associates First Capital Corp. and as senior vice president of technology at Bank of Boston.



Emerson U. Fullwood
Corp. VP & Chief of Staff & Marketing
Xerox Corp.

Age: 57

Fullwood was born in Supply, North Carolina, so perhaps it was fate that led him to the \$15.7 billion Stamford, Connecticut-based supplier of office products. Named to his position in October 2004, Fullwood is responsible for directing sales of office products through resellers, agents, dealers, and other distribution channels. He was previously president of Xerox's Worldwide Customer Services Group, president of Xerox's Regional Operations (Latin America), and executive chief staff officer of Xerox Developing Markets Operations. Joining the copier manufacturer in 1972, Fullwood, who was featured on **BE's** Top 50 Blacks in Corporate America, in 2000, has always focused on customer service. He says that "customer satisfaction is the bottom line for success."



George Hamilton
President, Dow Automotive
Dow Chemical

Age: 49

Hamilton joined Dow in 1977 as a seller of plastics to the automotive industry and has held a variety of positions in sales, marketing, application development, and business operations. He is responsible for growing Dow Automotive business from a materials sales office to a strategic division, offering product development and engineering services. Hamilton was handpicked to help transform Dow Automotive into its profit center in 2000. Today, he oversees a \$1.5 billion business unit that includes 1,700 employees and 40 locations worldwide. Largely responsible for the company's shift from selling materials to engineering systems and components, he also leads the Dow Automotive executive management and automotive leadership teams. In 2003, Dow Chemical, the parent company, generated \$32.6 billion in revenues.



Paula Madison President & General Manager
KNBC

Age: 52 Location: Los Angeles

Madison believes there's an art to news reporting: facts, integrity, passion, and making a connection with the audience. That's why the once self-acknowledged print snob never thought she'd wind up in television. She considered it fluff, lacking the grit and substance she pursued first as an investigative bureau reporter for the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in Fort Worth, Texas, and then as an assistant city editor for the *Dallas Times Herald*. But her work ethic and passion for news made her an attractive recruit for broadcasting. She joined NBC's New York station in 1989 as assistant news director. In 1999, as vice president and news director, she led NBC to first place in November sweeps for all local newscasts—a first for the station in 16 years. Today, Madison admits she absolutely loves television. And she's still winning sweeps—now in L.A. as president and general manager of KNBC (this past November, the station retained first place for the 11 p.m. news broadcast). Madison is also regional manager for NBC/Telemundo stations KVEA and KWHY. Los Angeles is No. 2 for general-market television viewers in the nation, but No. 1 for the Hispanic market. "Whenever I'm asked how [I got] to this point, I always say you have to agree with the principles and goals of your company. If you don't, you're always going to look for the next company to be in love with." —Sonia Alleyne



Hoyt Harper II
Senior Vice President, Four Points by Sheraton
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.

Age: 50

Harper is responsible for all operational aspects of the Four Points by Sheraton hotels, including brand standards, product development, and owner relations. Its parent company, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, generated \$3.8 billion in revenues and is ranked among the top 500 publicly traded companies. It is also perhaps one of the largest employers in the nation, employing some 110,000 people around the globe. Under Harper's leadership, Four Points by Sheraton had been voted the No. 1 mid-priced hotel brand by *Business Travel News* in 2002. A 22-year veteran, Harper has served as the company's senior vice president of business development and marketing programs. As such, he structured strategic alliances for Starwood and developed loyalty and membership programs.



Isaiah "Ike" Harris Jr.
President
BellSouth Advertising & Publishing Group

Age: 52

Born in West Memphis, Arkansas, Harris spent eight years as a professional football player with the then-St. Louis Cardinals and the New Orleans Saints before joining the accounting and consulting firm KPMG Peat Marwick. In November 2004, Harris was named to his current position, overseeing Berry Co.; Stevens Graphics; and IntelliVentures, the Internet company that produces Real Pages.com. Harris will continue to be responsible for BellSouth's Latin American operations. In January 2004, He was named president of BellSouth Enterprises, which generates 15% of BellSouth's \$22.6 billion in revenues. Harris served three years as president of BellSouth Consumer Services, responsible for the strategic marketing, sales, and customer service direction.



Darryl B. Hazel
President, Lincoln-Mercury
Ford Motor Co.

Age: 55

In 1972, Hazel joined Ford Motor Co.—the fourth largest automaker in the United States with 2003 revenues of \$164.2 billion—as an analyst in Lincoln-Mercury's New York District Sales Office. Twenty-four years later, after serving in various capacities in five different cities, Hazel now heads all aspects of marketing, sales, and service for the Ford division that manufactures Lincoln and Mercury cars. Lincoln is well known for its luxury Town Car sedans, while popular Mercury models include the Sable and Grand Marquis. Hazel has held his current position since August 2002. Prior to that, he was vice president of the Ford Customer Service division. He was elected vice president of Ford Motor Co. in December 2001. Hazel has developed a plan that focuses on pushing new and redesigned models to reach his ambitious goal of 500,000 units a year. ▶



Frederick W. Hill
Executive Vice President
J. P. Morgan Chase & Co.

Age: 55

Hill is responsible for global corporate marketing and communications. His role is key in making sure that the \$44.4 billion financial services institution builds its brands, products, and services to beat tough competitors such as Citigroup and Bank of America. As a member of the firm's executive committee, its senior policy-making group, Hill has had a successful career at one of our nation's largest banks. He served in the same capacity with Chase Manhattan Bank before it merged with J.P. Morgan. Hill joined Chase in September 1997 from McDonnell Douglas Corp., where he served as senior vice president for communications and community relations. Hill holds a bachelor's and a J.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and serves on various corporate boards.



Theopolis Holeman
Group VP of Power Delivery, Duke Power
Duke Energy

Age: 55

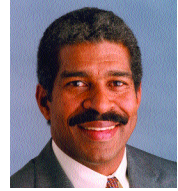
When hurricanes threaten the Carolinas' coastline, residents worry about downed power lines and blackouts. Making sure that area residents have the power to function is just one of the challenges Holeman faced as Hurricane Isabel made its way north in September 2003. At that time, he was executive vice president of power delivery for Duke Power. In his current position, which he has held since March 2004, Holeman is responsible for leading the power delivery organization, which encompasses the electric distribution and electric transmission systems of Duke Power's service area in North and South Carolina. Duke Power is a business unit of the \$23 billion Duke Energy, one of the nation's largest electric utilities. Prior to his current position, Holeman served as executive vice president of transmission and engineering for the Houston-based subsidiary, Duke Energy Gas Transmission.



Louis W. Hoyes
Exec. VP, Single Family Mortgage Business
Fannie Mae

Age: 56

Hoyes oversees the mortgage lending giant's single-family business and single-family customer technology. With 979 employees, including nine senior vice presidents and 26 vice presidents, this division is responsible for purchasing single-family mortgages, developing new mortgage products, and providing products and services to help lenders with portfolio management. In 2003, the unit contributed \$4.8 billion, or 32.4%, of Fannie Mae's taxable equivalent revenues. With \$43.8 billion in revenues for 2003, Fannie Mae is the 20th largest publicly traded company in the United States. Prior to his current position, Hoyes served as senior vice president of Multifamily Lending and Investment, managing and marketing the company's more than \$57.6 billion portfolio of multifamily loans and investments.



David E. Jackson
Divisional Vice President
Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

Age: 55

Jackson is responsible for operational aspects of 534 stores in 18 states in the mid-Northeastern and Northwestern United States for the world's largest retailer. He leads a management team that includes six regional vice presidents and 75 district managers. The Tuskegee Institute graduate joined the \$258.7 billion retailing titan in 1983 as an assistant manager and was named store manager for the Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Wal-Mart the following year. Over the next 10 years, he held positions of increasing responsibility—including district manager, region manager, and regional vice president—before being named to his current position in 1994. Jackson earned his degree in economics and business and was a business education major at the University of Alabama. He also received the first Sam Walton "Hero" Award for Excellence in 1995.



William Lamar Jr.
Chief Marketing Officer
McDonald's USA

Age: 52

Lamar is responsible for all U.S. marketing efforts of this \$17 billion fast-food company, the largest in the world. McDonald's has 13,000 restaurants in the United States alone. When Lamar served as general manager and regional vice president for McDonald's Atlanta Region, he was responsible for more than 700 restaurants in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, and portions of North Carolina and Tennessee. Over the past few years, Lamar has helped build up the flagging franchise. Just two years ago, consumers old and young were shunning staples such as Big Macs and Happy Meals. But due in large part to Lamar's innovative marketing strategy and campaigns to target different market segments, systemwide sales were up 7% through November 2004. The company posted double-digit same-store sales increases for two consecutive year-over-year periods.



Pierre E. Leroy
President, Worldwide Construction & Forestry
Deere & Co.

Age: 56

Originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Leroy majored in political science as an undergrad at the University of Michigan. He began his career at the world's leading manufacturer of agricultural and forestry equipment in 1976 as assistant manager of domestic finance. As president of the company's Worldwide Construction and Forestry Division (since 1996) and Worldwide Parts Division (since 2003), Leroy had an operating profit of \$152 million in 2003. Sales increased 24%. By the end of the third quarter in 2004, his divisions' sales rose 40%. Operating profit improved to \$155 million for the quarter and \$393 million for nine months, compared to \$59 million and \$111 million the previous year. Within the two divisions, Leroy oversees 7,300 employees. Deere & Co. had 2003 revenues of \$15.8 billion.



Charles E. Phillips Jr. Co-president & Director, **Oracle Corp.**

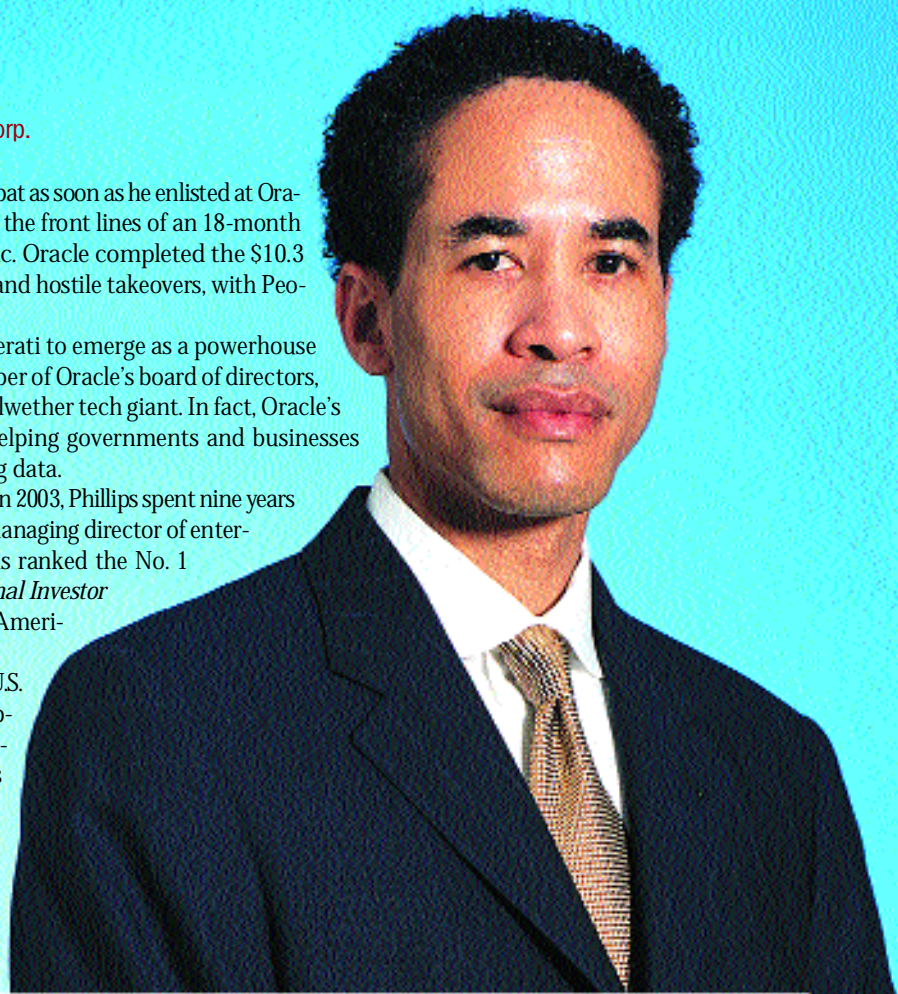
Age: 45 Location: Redwood Shores, CA

A former Marine captain, Phillips went into combat as soon as he enlisted at Oracle, the \$9.5 billion software company. He was on the front lines of an 18-month battle for rival software company PeopleSoft Inc. Oracle completed the \$10.3 billion merger, one of last year's most publicized and hostile takeovers, with PeopleSoft accepting a \$26.50-per-share buyout.

Achieving such triumphs has enabled this digerati to emerge as a powerhouse within his organization and the industry. A member of Oracle's board of directors, he's responsible for the field operations of the bellwether tech giant. In fact, Oracle's entire strategy revolves around information—helping governments and businesses become more effective at managing and securing data.

Before joining Oracle as executive vice president in 2003, Phillips spent nine years with Morgan Stanley and rose to the position of managing director of enterprise and Internet software. In 1994, Phillips was ranked the No. 1 enterprise software industry analyst by *Institutional Investor* magazine and named one of **BE's** Top 50 African Americans on Wall Street in 2002.

Phillips holds a B.S. in computer science from the U.S. Air Force Academy, an M.B.A. in finance from Hampton University, and a J.D. from New York University Law School. As a result of his experiences, his business and personal philosophies are intertwined: "Having a passion for what you do, being technically prepared all the time, and having a willingness to take risks are the kinds of things that I have always believed in—whether in business or as an officer in the Marine Corps."
—Carolyn M. Brown



Dennis Maple
Exec. VP, Aramark Education, Facilities Services
Aramark Corp.

Age: 44

Maple manages an employee team of more than 7,500 and, on a national level, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of more than 400 clients in the higher education and K-12 market for one of the leading food caterers. His division represented approximately \$375 million of Aramark's \$9.7 billion in revenues. Based in Philadelphia, Aramark's other customers include sports arenas, hospitals, and business cafeterias. Maple built his career in sales, market development, and operations at several large companies, including Kraft-General Foods, Pepsi-Cola, and Coors Brewing Co., where he served as the area vice president in the Dallas region. Maple was also the zone development manager for the Jackson, Florida, region of the Quaker Oats Co. He earned his B.A. at the University of Tennessee.



Gary E. McCullough
President, Ross Products Division
Senior Vice President, **Abbott Laboratories**

Age: 46

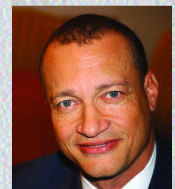
As of December 2003, McCullough has been a top gun at Ross, overseeing a product portfolio exceeding \$2 billion in sales for the nutritional needs company, which produces brands such as Similac baby formula, Ensure, and the Glucerna diabetic products. McCullough recently added muscle to the product line with the \$320 million acquisition of Experimental Applied Sciences, makers of health and fitness products such as Myoplex and Body for Life. The senior vice president leads 5,600 employees through 12 department managers who report directly to him. McCullough started his career as a U.S. Army Infantry officer. He came to Ross from Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., where he managed a \$1.2 billion product portfolio. Under his leadership, Wrigley's market share grew from 47.5% to 58.4% in three years.



John Mims
Senior Vice President, Worldwide Sales
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc.

Age: 41

Mims is one of the top executives accountable for maximizing earnings and increasing the profitability of the company's existing portfolio. He supervises global sales organizations and functions at the corporate and division levels of Starwood, a hotel owner and franchisor with more than 740 properties worldwide and \$3.7 billion in revenues. Previously, Mims led Starwood's Asia-Pacific sales and marketing team and managed a team of regional marketing directors. Before joining the company, Mims, a graduate of Morehouse College, was chief operating officer for GetAsia.com, a premier network of Asian Websites that provided on-demand entertainment and information. He also worked at Procter & Gamble.



Harold L. Morrison Jr.
Exec. VP, Managing Dir. & U.S. Field Ops. Manager
Chubb & Son



Morrison is responsible for branch and producer profit growth, generating sales and meeting budget targets. He oversees field operations, which, in 2003, brought in 80% of Chubb's recorded \$11.1 billion in net premiums written. With more than 12,000 employees throughout North America, Europe, South America, and the Pacific Rim, Chubb serves property and casualty customers from more than 130 offices in 29 countries. Chubb works closely with 8,000 independent agents and brokers worldwide and is ranked among the top 10 publicly traded insurance organizations based on revenues in the United States. Prior to this position, Morrison was the New York brokerage zone officer. In his 20-year career at Chubb, Morrison has also served as Seattle branch manager and Northern zone manager for the company's Department of Financial Institutions.

Vicki R. Palmer
Executive Vice President
Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc.



Age: 51
Palmer is one of the key earnings drivers for one of the largest soft drink bottlers in the world. In addition to bottling Coke, the company handles the Minute Maid line of juice products. Palmer manages the company's \$12 billion multi-currency debt portfolio, \$2.5 billion pension plan, 401(k) plan investments, and commercial and investment banking relations. She helps establish the strategic direction of the company's organizational development efforts. Before joining Coca-Cola in 1983 as manager of worldwide pension investments, Palmer spent five years at FedEx, where she was the company's first black female manager. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Palmer held numerous financial positions at FedEx. She was formerly the manager of corporate finance. Prior to her current role, she was a corporate loan officer.

Kim Nelson
President, **Snacks Unlimited**
Corp. VP, **General Mills**



Age: 41
Since joining General Mills in 1988, Nelson has concentrated on the cereal and snack business, identifying growth opportunities and developing marketing strategies for a portfolio of products. As president of Snacks Unlimited, an appointment she assumed in 2004, Nelson is responsible for the profitability and growth of the company's snack business, which includes Pop Secret popcorn, Nature Valley granola bars, Bugles, and Chex Mix. Nelson previously served as vice president of the Family Business dinner unit in the meals division. She was named vice president of General Mills in 1999. General Mills generated \$10.5 billion in revenues for 2003. Nelson serves on the advisory board of the Black Champions Network, a General Mills employee network that she also helped establish. She received her M.B.A. from Columbia University.

Cecil B. Pickett
President, Schering-Plough Research Institute
Senior Vice President, **Schering Plough**



Age: 59
Pickett heads the pharmaceutical research arm of Schering-Plough, a health-care company that produces prescription medications. Pickett, whose 2003 research and development efforts generated \$1.47 billion in revenues, had a hand in marketing successful allergy and respiratory drugs like Clarinex, Claritin, and Nasonex. The medications contributed more than \$4.2 billion to the company's bottom line when they hit the market. Pickett came to Schering-Plough from Merck Research Laboratories, where he served as senior vice president. He is also a member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Science Board. Pickett holds a Ph.D. in cell biology from UCLA and has been published extensively in leading research journals. He has been a frequent speaker at scientific symposiums and conferences.

Rodney O'Neal
President, Dynamics, Propulsion,
Thermal & Interior Sector, **Delphi Corp.**



Age: 51
Spun off from General Motors in 1999, Delphi, headquartered in Troy, Michigan, is the world's largest maker of auto parts. O'Neal's sector produces energy management systems, chassis, steering, thermal systems products, automotive electronics, audio, and other safety and communication products. In 2003, this sector generated \$14.2 billion of Delphi's \$28.1 billion annual revenues. In addition, O'Neal is responsible for Delphi's operations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and South America. He also serves as the strategic champion for Delphi's Ford customer team. He started his career at GM in 1971 as a student at General Motors Institute (now Kettering University), then moved on to a number of engineering and manufacturing positions in Dayton, Ohio; Portugal; and Canada. He accepted his current position in 2003.

Myrtle S. Potter
President, Commercial Operations
Genentech Inc.



Age: 46
Potter has distinguished herself in the field of biotechnology by taking brands of medicine and making them household names. At Merck, where Potter spent 14 years (three of them as vice president of the Northeast Region Business Group), she led the marketing of the ulcer remedy Prilosec. Later, at Bristol-Meyers Squibb, where Potter held various executive positions from 1996 to 2000, she was in charge of marketing the cholesterol drug Pravachol. She joined Genentech in 2000 as executive vice president and chief operating officer. She now leads Genentech's commercial operations, including sales, marketing, managed care, commercial development, and dedicated support. She also co-chairs Genentech's product portfolio committee, providing strategic and financial oversight of the drug development portfolio.

Rayford Wilkins Jr. Group President & CEO of Enterprise Business Sales,
SBC Communications

Age: 53 Location: San Antonio

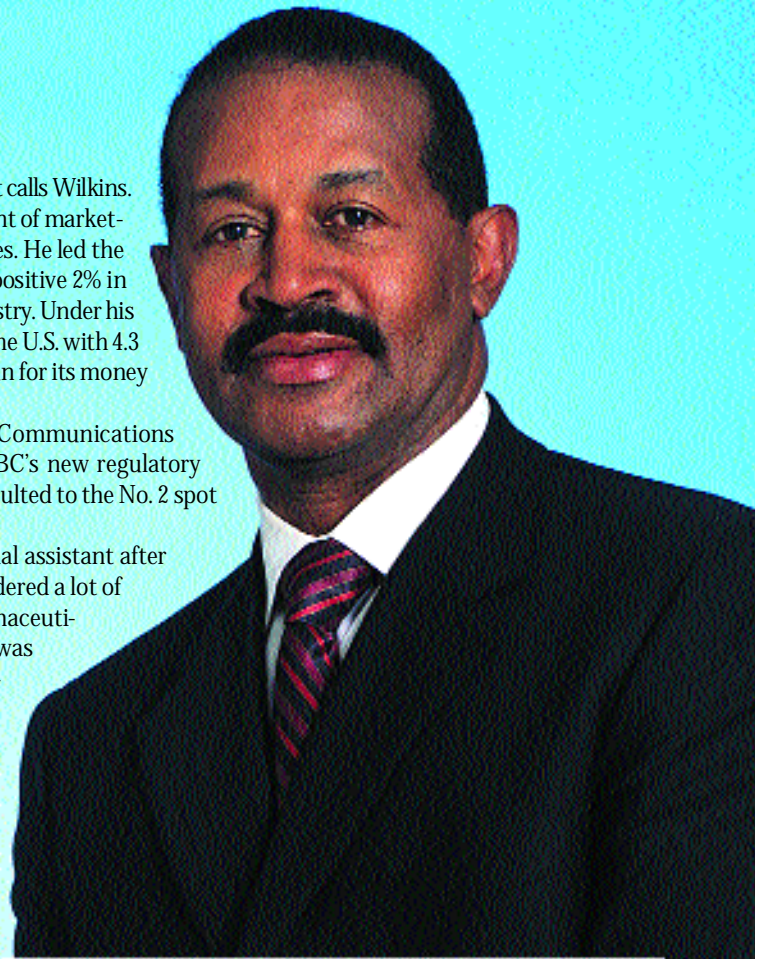
When this regional Baby Bell looks for growth and profitability, it calls Wilkins. Before taking on his current position, Wilkins was group president of marketing and sales, responsible for nearly \$30 billion in annual revenues. He led the turnaround from a negative 8% in annual revenues growth to a positive 2% in less than 24 months—an unprecedented performance in the industry. Under his leadership, SBC launched and became the No. 1 DSL provider in the U.S. with 4.3 million customers at the end of September 2004, giving cable a run for its money in the battle of the bandwidths.

Late in 2003, SBC was granted approval from the Federal Communications Commission to provide long-distance service. Wilkins sees SBC's new regulatory freedom as an opening to capture market share. It has already vaulted to the No. 2 spot in long-distance service with nearly 20 million customers.

The 30-year telecom veteran began his career as a commercial assistant after earning a bachelor's degree in business administration. "I considered a lot of different areas, looking at everything from technology to pharmaceutical sales. But the one thing that attracted me to [the company] was the fact that I had the opportunity to go directly into management," he says.

"The key is to have challenging positions, to have something where you're actually creating a new opportunity or you're doing a turnaround for the company or something that presents a sizable challenge to you and your leadership capabilities."

—Patrice D. Johnson



Sylvia Rhone
President, **Motown Records**
Executive Vice President, **Universal Records**

Age: 53

On the list of pop-music divas, Rhone is definitely at the top—not as a musical talent, but as the woman with the knack for identifying the hottest superstars, from R&B to rap. The New York native has a bachelor's degree in economics from Wharton. She began her career in the record business 30 years ago at Buddha Records. In 1990, she became the first African American woman to head a major record company when she was named CEO and president of Atlantic's EastWest Records America division. Named to her current position at Motown in September 2004, she is responsible for the Motown label, in addition to all projects under the Universal Music Group family of labels, which is part of the international conglomerate Vivendi Universal. In 1996, she led a fundraising benefit to help rebuild churches destroyed by fire.



Desiree G. Rogers
Corp. Sr. VP, **Peoples Energy Corp.**
President, **Peoples Gas & North Shore**

Age: 45

At Peoples Energy of Chicago, Rogers helps keep residents of the Windy City warm. She is responsible for the utilities' field operations, customer service functions, and gas supply management. Rogers was named to her current position in July 2004. A graduate of Harvard Business School, Rogers joined Peoples Energy in 1997 as vice president of corporate communications, and in 2000 she was named chief marketing officer. Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas reported \$142 million in operating income in fiscal year 2004 out of a total operating income of \$171 million. In 2003, Peoples Energy generated \$2.1 billion in revenues. Before joining Peoples Energy, Rogers was the director of the Illinois Lottery. She currently serves on the corporate board of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois.



Cathy D. Ross
Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer
Federal Express Corp.

Age: 47

FedEx Express is the largest subsidiary of FedEx Corp. and the largest express courier, delivering about 3 million packages a day worldwide and generating \$17.3 billion in sales. Since February 2004, Ross has served as the company's financial chief, but in recent years she has played a pivotal role in FedEx Express' successful efforts to expand its global reach, increase profitability, and keep the company competitive as it battles carriers such as UPS and DHL. Ross, who holds an M.B.A. from the University of Memphis, joined FedEx in 1984 as a senior financial analyst and served as vice president of express financial planning. With annual revenues of \$23 billion, FedEx is a global leader in providing transportation, e-commerce, and supply chain management services.



Debra A. Sandler
Worldwide Group Vice President
McNeil Nutritionals

Age: 44

Sandler is responsible for the global marketing of the company's products, including Splenda, Viactiv, Lactaid, and Benecol, in addition to branding and driving on a global scale many of the company's new products. She leads McNeil Nutritionals' North American Management Board and has full functional and profits and loss responsibility for operations, quality assurance, sales, marketing, communications, R&D, finance, and human resources. She also oversees the company's operations in Central and South America. Her strategic planning helped to make Splenda one of the company's top-selling sweeteners three years after it was launched. Sandler spent 13 years at Pepsico where she held a variety of marketing positions on several brands that included Mountain Dew, Slice, and Mug Root Beer.



Paula Sneed
Senior Vice President, Marketing Resources
Kraft Foods Inc.

Age: 57

Sneed is responsible for the company's global marketing services and e-commerce initiatives. Previously, as president of e-commerce and marketing services, she managed a \$1.5 billion-a-year budget, marketing more than 100 brands at the nation's biggest food company. Kraft Foods, which has \$31 billion in annual sales, is currently changing its organizational structure to position itself better in the global economy. Sneed helps align the company's five global consumer sectors of beverages, snacks, cheese and dairy, convenient meals, and groceries. Kraft Foods markets several leading brands, including Kraft, Maxwell House, Nabisco, Oscar Mayer, Post, and Milka, in more than 150 countries.



Bertram L. Scott
Executive Vice President, Product Management
TIAA-CREF

Age: 53

Operating on a \$211 million budget, Scott heads the New York division that develops a wide range of financial services products, generating about \$15 billion in premiums and net flows in 2004. Scott oversees the Project Management Group, which includes pensions, institutional asset management, individual wealth management, college savings plans, and business development. The DePaul University graduate joined TIAA-CREF in 2000 as president of TIAA-CREF Life Insurance Co. Scott is a 32-year insurance and healthcare veteran with prior executive posts at Prudential Healthcare and Horizon Mercy, a managed care program, where he served as president and CEO. He is an adjunct professor at Meharry Medical School, and in 2000, the New Jersey chapter of the NAACP named him CEO of the Year. Scott is also a board member for the American Heart Association.



Glenn C. Taylor
Group President, Government & Key Accounts
Medco Health Solutions

Age: 52

Medco Health Solutions, formerly Merck-Medco Managed Care, is the top pharmacy benefits management company in the United States. Medco helps patients, through their jobs, unions, or HMOs, fill prescriptions by mail order or online within a network of pharmacies. The \$35 billion company, based in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, is one of the nation's 100 largest firms. Taylor is responsible for Medco's Key Accounts group: government, labor groups, and UnitedHealth Group. He founded the UnitedHealth Group division in 1999 and served as its president until April 2002. Taylor later worked as Medco's senior vice president of account management before assuming his current role. Before joining Medco, Taylor was president of FlexRx, which was acquired by Medco in 1993.



Bradley T. Sheares
President, U.S. Human Health Division
Merck

Age: 47

Pharmaceuticals company Merck, based in Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, made news last year when its best-selling arthritis drug Vioxx was recalled after studies revealed that it increased the risk of heart attack and stroke. Still, the \$22.5 billion drug company, one of the 100 largest publicly traded companies in the United States, does brisk business in its other remedies, including those for hypertension and high cholesterol. Sheares plays a major role in their development. In his current position, Sheares is responsible for the sales and marketing of the company's portfolio of medicines and treatments for chronic diseases. He also oversees the U.S. sales force that calls on office-based physicians, sales services, and medical and scientific affairs. Holding a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Purdue University, Sheares was part of Merck's research team from 1987 to 1990.



Don Thompson
Exec. VP & Innovation Orchestration Leader,
Restaurant Solutions Group, McDonald's USA

Age: 41

Thompson oversees new menu innovations for McDonald's in 120 countries. He provides system leadership to identify and capitalize on new growth opportunities, including the supervision of concept development, R&D, and menu management. Previously, he was president of McDonald's West Division, which included more than 4,000 restaurants and generated one-third of the company's 2003 revenues. Today, McDonald's is doing well with an emphasis on creating a new relationship with its customers. Through November 2004, McDonald's sales were up 7.9% worldwide, and same-store sales were up 7.1% worldwide. Overall, McDonald's is driving growth for the entire quick-service restaurant category, and published reports suggest that competitors are struggling to keep up.



Ronald A. Williams President & Director, **Aetna Inc.**

Age: 55 Location: Hartford, CT

As president of Aetna, Williams took the \$18 billion healthcare giant off life support. When he accepted the position in 2002, the company was hemorrhaging red ink, posting a loss of \$279.6 million. To revive the ailing institution, he performed radical surgery, cutting costs and laying off thousands of employees while targeting new revenue sources.

Now, the company is back on track. "The objective was to focus on the creation of a new generation of products, providing consumers with much more choice and flexibility," he says. "We introduced those products in 2002. Our membership has begun to grow. This year, through the third quarter, we added 652,000 net new members as a result of many of these changes."

Williams has also pushed Aetna to become an industry leader by taking on issues such as racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare.

He oversees 27,000 employees and controls a leviathan that touches millions of lives. Aetna insures 13.6 million individuals for medical coverage; 11 million for dental coverage, 8 million for pharmacy coverage, and 12 million for group life and disability coverage.

Williams, who earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from Roosevelt University and a master's degree from MIT's Sloan School of Management, gravitated toward healthcare because of his interest in service-oriented businesses. Today, he makes sure that he takes care of the needs of his customers—rich or poor—while ensuring that Aetna has a healthy bottom line.

—Patrice D. Johnson



John R. Thompson

Senior Vice President & G.M., BestBuy.com
Best Buy Co. Inc.

Age: 52

In his position, Thompson is directly responsible for all aspects of the business unit, including operations and profit and loss. He joined Best Buy in 2001 as senior vice president of Supply Chain and Business Systems for Best Buy stores. Previously, he held positions at Goody's Family Clothing Inc.; Lee Apparel Co.; and General Electric, where he spent 15 years serving the marketing, logistics, finance, and operations units. BestBuy.com is the wholly owned Internet subsidiary of Best Buy, a specialty retailer of consumer electronics, personal computers, entertainment software, and major appliances. Thompson serves as a director of the Best Buy Children's Foundation and is a member of the National Retail Federation's Information Technology Council.

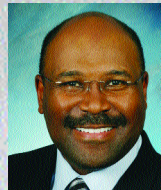


Matthew Thornton

Sr. VP, AGFS division, FedEx Express
FedEx Corp.

Age: 46

Thornton is directly responsible for FedEx customers' package delivery day in and day out. The senior executive oversees all strategic planning for the sort, line haul pickup, and delivery of FedEx Express freight services worldwide. For the past six years, Thornton has served as vice president, central region, of U.S. domestic ground operations and has enhanced service and profitability for the \$17 billion subsidiary. The Memphis native holds an M.B.A. from the University of Tennessee. In the past, Thornton served as co-chair of the FedEx United Way corporate campaign. He's also the recipient of four FedEx Express Five Star Awards, the highest award the company bestows on individual employees in recognition of outstanding performance.



Michael A. Todman

Executive VP; President, Whirlpool Europe
Whirlpool Corp.

Age: 46

Todman has traveled the world for Whirlpool, the No. 1 appliance maker in the United States. Based in Benton Harbor, Michigan, Todman assumed his current titles in October 2001 after serving as executive vice president of Whirlpool's North American region, which posted record sales and operating profit for the last quarter he was there. Todman joined Whirlpool in 1993 as director of finance for the United Kingdom and, in succession, became general manager of Northern Europe and vice president of consumer services at Whirlpool Europe. Whirlpool has companies in 13 countries and markets products under 18 brand names in more than 170 countries. Whirlpool generated \$12.2 billion in revenues in 2003, up 11% from 2002. ▶



Kevin Walker
President & COO, American Electric Power, Ohio
American Electric Power Co. Inc.

American Electric Power Co., based in Columbus, Ohio, generates and distributes power to 5 million customers in 11 states. In 2003, the company generated \$15.4 billion in revenues. Walker is responsible for serving 1.44 million customers in Ohio and Northern West Virginia. He has authority for distribution operations and a wide range of customer and regulatory relationships. Walker came to his job after 12 years with Consolidated Edison in various leadership positions, including vice president of Maintenance and Construction Services of New York, serving the five boroughs of New York City and Westchester. While serving at ConEd, he was instrumental in directing recovery of energy service following the collapse of the World Trade Center's Twin Towers. Walker, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, earned a B.A. in civil engineering in 1985. He served more than six years in the Army.



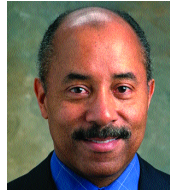
Chris C. Womack
Sr. VP, Fossil & Hydro Power, Georgia Power Co.,
Southern Co.

Age: 47
Womack oversees coal and gas-fired generating facilities for Georgia Power, which serves more than 2 million residential, commercial, and industrial customers. Womack also serves as an officer in Southern Company Generation and Energy Marketing, a business unit that manages 72 fossil and hydro plants. Womack came to Georgia Power from Alabama Power as a governmental affairs representative, having worked as a U.S. Congressional legislative aide. The \$5 billion Georgia Power is the largest of five electric utilities that make up Southern Co., a regional energy company. Womack is on the boards of A.G. Gaston Enterprises and Boy Scouts of America, and is a member of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta. A native of Greenville, Alabama, Womack has a bachelor's from Western Michigan University.



Ed Welburn
Vice President of Design, North America
General Motors

Age: 54
As director of GM's Corporate Brand Center, Welburn led his team in developing new vehicles for GM's North American brands. He is responsible for the designs of all GM brands, including the retooling of the Saturn automotive line and the revitalization of the muscle car standard, Corvette. In October 2003, Welburn became design chief, only the sixth in GM's 95-year history. Welburn is the first African American to run the design studio of any major automaker. With an army of 600 designers at 11 studios around the world, Welburn has been traveling the globe meeting his designers in their territory. He is responsible for day-to-day management of GM Design, is a member of the GM North American Strategy Board, and oversees GM's Global Design Council. GM is the third largest publicly traded company in the United States.



Keith Williamson
President, Capital Services Division
Pitney Bowes Inc.

Age: 52
Pitney Bowes is best known for its postage meters, but the \$4.6 billion company, based in Stamford, Connecticut, also offers a wide range of financial, outsourcing, and professional services. Since 1999, Williamson has been overseeing Pitney Bowes' capital services division, a \$168 million division that finances distribution and office facilities, aircraft, rail and trucking equipment. Williamson joined Pitney Bowes Financial Services as director of taxes in 1988. He was promoted to assistant general counsel in 1993 and to vice president, secretary, and general counsel of PBF in 1994. In April 1998, he assumed additional responsibilities as senior associate general counsel—mergers and acquisitions. The St. Louis native earned law and business degrees from Harvard and his master of laws degree in taxation from New York University Law School.



By The Numbers

Gender Breakdown:

60 | 15
Men | Women

Average Age:

51
Within a range of 36-65

Education:

Earned Advanced Degrees
Yes | No
45 | 30

M.B.A.s: 29

J.D.s: 10

Ph.D.s: 2

Earned Both M.B.A. & Ph.D.: 4

Industries Represented:

8 Financial
6 Consumer Products
5 Utilities
5 Food Service
5 Automotive
5 Media
5 Computer/Office Equipment

Other Areas:

Telecommunications
Energy
Pharmaceuticals
Beverages
Mail, Package, and Freight Delivery

Average Tenure:

14 Years

Al Zollar
General Manager, Tivoli Software
IBM

Age: 50
Zollar oversees the strategic direction and operation of the Tivoli software brand for IT infrastructure, storage, and security management at the \$89.1 billion company. A Big Blue heavyweight, Zollar was the executive who steered Lotus' transition from a private company to an integrated software division. Over the past two decades, he has held executive positions within all of IBM's software units as well as its hardware business. Zollar, who has a master's in applied mathematics from the University of California, first came to IBM in 1977 as a systems engineer trainee. He sits on the board of directors of Chubb Corp. He's also an advocate and supporter of business and community-based organizations aimed at expanding opportunities for minorities. A member of the Executive Leadership Council, he also co-chairs the IBM Black Family Technology Awareness project.

