

# 7TH ANNUAL GRABB AWARDS



# 2020

# Welcome to the 2020 GRABB Awards



## About GRABB Awards Event

The evening of November 19th from 6pm-8pm. We are excited to present our 7th Annual GRABB Awards Reception Virtually. The GRABB Awards Reception is a one-of-a-kind, event designed to recognize those contributing to the forward progress of our community and advance the work of Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses.

The GRABB Awards were created to recognize, affirm and celebrate Black businesses, individuals and community organizations that work hard to build up and make a difference in our community.

# Schedule

### 6:00pm - 6:30 pm

The GRABB Mixx Featuring PJ Da DJ Sponsored BY Motu Viget Spirits

### 6:30 pm

- Welcome and Introduction
- Thank sponsors
- Greetings and Opening remarks
- Intro/overview of GRABB and Awards

### Award Presentation

Rueben Smartt Young, Black & Gifted Award Presentation  
Edith Rasberry Emerging Black Business Award Presentation

### Video

Let's Talk SHOP w/Mark, Jermaine, Jamiel, JP III (video)

### Award Presentation

The Black Bottom Community Builder Award Presentation  
NC Mutual Life Insurance Co Collaboration Award Presentation

### Video

The Rising Show

### Award Presentation

Harlem Renaissance Culture Architect Award Presentation

### Video

Black Businesses of Grand Rapids

### Honoree Presentation

Marcus Garvey Legacy Award

### 8:00 pm

Closing Remarks

# Awards Description and Awards Category Finalists Names and Profiles

## Reuben Smartt Young, Black & Gifted Award

Recognizing an up-and-coming leader under the age of 30 whose leadership promotes economic and/or social change in the community.

Mr. Smartt was one of the first African-Americans to serve in the United States Marines and was an education leader in Grand Rapids, MI known for his signature \$2 bills he would reward students with. Mr. Smartt received the Congressional Gold Medal. Mr. Smartt went on to play in the Negro Leagues for the Grand Rapids Black Sox Baseball Team and eventually signed with the Cleveland Indians making it as far as triple A.



### Finalist

- Kiara Baskin
- Deandre Jones
- Shanta Abraham

## Edith Rasberry Emerging Black Business Award

Recognizes a Black business that embodies GRABB's Core Values (Stellar Customer Service, Great Products/Services & Community Oriented) and has been in operation for 1-5 years.

Mrs. Edith Rasberry was the Founder and President of Rasberry Bail Bonds. Rasberry Bail Bonds was established in 1965. Mrs. Rasberry was not only the first African American woman to own a bail bonds company she was the first woman in the US. Mrs. Rasberry served our community for over 40 years through many business and philanthropic efforts. Rasberry Bail Bonds is still in business making it one of the oldest and longest running Black businesses in Grand Rapids.



### Finalist

- Social Arts | Darrin Mayweather & Christopher Sampson
- Cindy's Chicken Coop | Lucinda Waver
- We Are Lit | Kendra Mcniel

## The Black Bottom Community Builder Award

Recognizes a community leader, group or organization that works tirelessly, passionately and collectively to build up our community.

The Black Bottom was indeed a paradise for black entrepreneurial businesses in Detroit, MI. Named for the rich dark soil that French explorers first found there, the Black Bottom district in the 1940's and '50's housed the city's African-American entrepreneurial class, with dozens of thriving black-owned businesses and the Paradise Valley entertainment zone, where Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie performed. Black Bottom was a predominantly black neighborhood in Detroit, Michigan demolished for redevelopment in the early 1960's and replaced with Lafayette Park. One of the many urban renewal projects that destroyed predominantly Black communities across the United States.

### Finalist

- Marcel Price
- Nikeidra DeBarge
- Brandon Kimble



## NC Mutual Life Insurance Co Collaboration Award

Recognizes businesses, organizations and initiatives that exemplifies collaboration. Focused on innovative relationships and practices over and above standard and traditional ones as well as alliances that achieved exceptional results.

Founded in 1898 and by 1899 and they had less than \$1000 in income. It was during that time that Merrick, Moore and other influential Black businessmen in Durham, bought the Royal Knights of King David, a semi-religious fraternal and beneficial society for health and life insurance. Modeled after popular mutual benefit societies, the concept was based on the premise that income from insurance sales could be channeled back into the community. Throughout its history, the company has had programs to build strong black families and communities through jobs, investments, loans, contributions and support of social programs. The phrase 'merciful to all' was the company's first motto. With a sense of corporate social consciousness and responsibility, the company formulated its concept of the Double-Duty Dollar. By 1910, their bankroll had increased to \$250,000. During its existence, North Carolina Mutual was a catalyst for Black, social and economic development.

### Finalist

- Dreams Take Work
- VSJ Fitness
- The Black Book Exchange Box



## Harlem Renaissance Culture Architect Award

Recognizes an individual, group or organization that has taken it upon themselves to build and influence the cultural, social and artistic scene in our community.

The Harlem Renaissance was the development of the Harlem neighborhood in New York City as a black cultural mecca in the early 20th Century and the subsequent social and artistic explosion that resulted. Lasting roughly from the 1910s through the mid-1930s, the period is considered a golden age in African American culture, manifesting in literature, music, stage performance and art. During the time, it was known as the "New Negro Movement"; named after the 1925 anthology by Alain Locke. The Movement also included the new African-American cultural expressions across the urban areas in the Northeast and Midwest United States affected by the African-American Great Migration, of which Harlem was the largest. The Harlem Renaissance was considered to be a rebirth of African-American arts, Though it was centered in the Harlem neighborhood of the borough of Manhattan in New York City, many francophone black writers from African and Caribbean colonies who lived in Paris were also influenced by the Harlem Renaissance.

### Finalist

- Adrian Butler
- Ella Weber
- Asia Horne



## Marcus Garvey Legacy Award Honoree

Recognizing an Entrepreneurial leader who is the Standard Bearer for Black businesses in the community and has been operating their business for over 10 years aka Staying Power.

Marcus Mosiah Garvey Jr., was a political leader, publisher, journalist, entrepreneur, and orator who was a staunch proponent of the Black Nationalism movements, to which end he founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association. UNIA membership had grown to over two million. Garvey envisioned a great shipping line to foster black trade, to transport passengers between America, the Caribbean, and Africa, and to serve as a symbol of black grandeur and enterprise. The U.N.I.A. incorporated the Black Star Line in 1919. Garvey also began publishing the Negro World newspaper in New York. The Negro World, a widely disseminated weekly that was soon banned in many parts of Africa and the Caribbean because of its message and efforts to unite all Black people across the diaspora. Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association form a critical link in black America's centuries-long struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. As the leader of the largest organized mass movement in black history and progenitor of the modern "black is beautiful" ideal, Garvey is now best remembered as a champion of the back-to-Africa movement. In his own time he was hailed as a redeemer, a "Black Moses." Though he failed to realize all his objectives, his movement still represents a liberation from the psychological bondage of racial inferiority.

### Honoree

- Thomas Walker



# Sponsors Acknowledgements

## Tuskegee Institute

Tuskegee Institute was founded by Booker T. Washington in 1881 under a charter from the Alabama legislature for the purpose of training teachers in Alabama. Tuskegee's program provided students with both academic and vocational training. The students, under Washington's direction, built their own buildings, produced their own food, and provided for most of their own basic necessities. The Tuskegee faculty utilized each of these activities to teach the students basic skills that they could share with African American communities throughout the South.



## Greenwood, Archer & Pine

Dubbed America's "Black Wall Street" by Booker T. Washington, the 35-block Greenwood District surrounded the corner of Greenwood Avenue, Archer and Pine Street. The best description of Black Wall Street, or Little Africa as it was also known, would be to compare it to a mini Beverly Hills. It was the golden door of the Black community during the early 1900s, and it proved that African Americans could create a successful infrastructure with over 600 successful businesses. Among these were 21 churches, 21 restaurants, 30 grocery stores and two movie theaters, plus a hospital, a bank, a post office, libraries, schools, law offices, a half dozen private airplanes and even a bus system. That's what Black Wall Street was all about. When the tragic and devastating Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 destroyed much of the district.





# Sponsors Acknowledgements

## ST. Luke Penny Savings Bank

In 1903, the Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank opened its doors. Started by Maggie Walker in Richmond, Virginia, this was one of the first Black-owned banks in America. Walker holds the distinction of being the first African-American woman to establish and serve as president of a bank in the U.S. The Saint Luke Penny Savings Bank, as its name suggests, was established as an institution whose interest was the small investors, literally the pennies of the African-American washerwomen—ultimately proving that even with pennies, the African-American community had economic power.



# SPONSORS





Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses is an Economic Development company that focuses on fostering an economy that supports the revitalization of the Black community and expands opportunities for Black Businesses in the Metro Grand Rapids area by promoting economic empowerment and equity. Grand Rapids Area Black Businesses advocates for and promotes the development of black owned businesses to improve the quality of life for impoverished Black Families by creating a viable and sustainable business community.

### **Our Focus Areas**

- Creating & Providing Spaces and Places
- Education & Promotion
- Community Engagement
- Capacity Building and Resource Development