

## Can Black Americans Pull Together Economically?

By: W.L. Lillard  
—Guest Columnist—

One of the biggest problems we are facing as Blacks in America is the lack of ability to unite around economics. We can say this is because of our home training, so to speak.

Home training means Blacks were taught by the American system that you should never do business with your friends and never hire your relatives. While everyone else does just the opposite, building relationships, shopping and trading with one another is why businesses in other communities are successful and also why jobs are bountiful in those areas.

Talk about not hiring your relatives is bordering on insanity; these are the people who look out for you more than anyone. Look at the facts, the Ford Motor Company still has a Ford at the helm. Most companies are successful because of nepotism.

Not only do owners hire relatives but supervisors also hire their relatives to make themselves look good, because those relatives will work hard for the supervisor and the supervisor will look good. Contrast that with a Black supervisor; he will not hire a relative or a friend and Black people in general do not shop or trade with one another because of the aforementioned training.

Other cultures are told when they come to America to open a business in the Black community because Blacks do not shop with each other by and large; they would rather shop with anybody else but themselves.

Blacks spend all their Moines outside the Black community or with other cultures in the Black community and then go begging for set asides and other handouts.



W.L. Lillard

Blacks in America make and spend about \$800 billion per year, but because others do the research, the figure is reported to be less—the population of blacks in America or any other demographically information that will help blacks realize their power is also undercounted.

Blacks are called minorities in cities when we are over 50 percent of the population and given minority contracts and set aside jobs, even if the mayor is Black.

When Chicago elected a Black mayor, the beloved Harold Washington, whom we all loved dearly, it was proven at that time that the majority of Chicago was Black. Yet Harold instituted a milestone by declaring a 30 percent set aside for minorities, which included Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans. And included in that was five percent for women. Look at these facts, a 30 percent set aside for almost 90 percent of the city.

The bottom line is, Black Americans are the richest Africans on the planet but are too diversified in their thinking when it comes to economics to realize the benefits.

Most of that thinking is like the forbidden fruit syndrome. For so long Blacks could not shop outside their community, so small businesses were established in Black communities by Blacks and others to serve us; we would rather have the others serve us because of our long-standing role of serving others. Therefore, we shopped in the stores of others. Then when we're allowed to leave the community, all hell broke loose. Our communities went to the pits because most of our monies are spent outside the community.

We must unite around economics if we are to realize the benefits; \$800 billion could create 400 Fortune 500 type companies that are making \$100 million or more.

That also means full employment for Black people, because by now we would have knocked down the myth about doing business with your friends and hiring relatives.

(W.L. Lillard is a Chicago-based entrepreneur and Black business advocate.)



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