

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

RNDC proudly celebrates Black History Month, a time to acknowledge the rich culture and achievements of Blacks/African Americans. We have an ongoing commitment to a culture of inclusion, where diversity is celebrated and where every person can be her or his authentic self. RNDC truly values the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions of our diverse associates, communities, and business partners.

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Why is Black History Month important to you?

Black History Month is important to me because it's an opportunity to reflect and celebrate the accomplishments of so many African Americans and the role they played in the United States. I consider myself a lifelong learner and seem to discover new Black history stories every year that will inspire future generations. For example, one area in which Blacks continue to be a significant contributor is the beverage and cocktail trade.

Since the earliest days of European colonization, African Americans have been mixing cocktails. A freed slave by the name of Cato Alexander disrupted the industry when he opened his own establishment in New York called Cato's. Another notable bartender in the 1800's was John Dabney, the creator of the famous Mint Julep. While it was common for African American bartenders to be overlooked, a man by the name of Tom Bullock made it a point to leave his mark in history. In 1917, Bullock was the first African American to create a cocktail book, "The Ideal Bartender." But the enactment of prohibition, following the book's release, prevented it from reaching many African American bartenders. In recent years, however, the 150-cocktail recipe book was reprinted and distributed. The racism and inequality during the 18th and 19th centuries did not stop these remarkable men from leaving their much-appreciated legacy for future African American bartenders.



What would you like our RNDC/YMCO family to know about you? Briefly, tell us your story – personal and/or professional. What makes you uniquely you?

I am an accomplished leader with over 17 years of experience driving revenue through building and maintaining supplier relationships. I serve as a key member of the Supplier Business Development team that's charged with formulating strategic direction and devising business development initiatives consistent with the company's overall strategy.

In addition to being an accomplished leader at this company, I am also a phenomenal father and husband. The legacy I intend to leave starts with the understanding that we have an obligation to leave places better than we found them and to lead from wherever you are. It is critical that I document real-life experiences which have made a difference in the lives of others and my community. My legacy will document my failures in life as those were God's teachings, preparing me for greatness.

My playbook is built around discovering your passion early and being committed to the work it takes to live the life you have dreamed. I believe you should dream big, so big that your dreams keep you up at night. Most importantly, you must pursue a personal relationship with God. Pray every day for his forgiveness, protection, and guidance.



To tie in with our 2020 Black History Month theme, tell us about any family traditions or fond memories that involve music. Why is music important to the Black Experience?

I have several fond memories that involve music, as music was a way for me to escape. It was indeed my first love and I discovered her at the early age of nine. My love for music was genuine and pure because I admired how the combination of beats, instruments, and vocals could move people or help them identify with their struggles, love or pain. This obsession led me to begin my DJing career at the age of 11. I discovered all types of music that blended together to create a sound that would soon allow me to connect with others. I have been blessed to work with so many local and national recording artist throughout the years, winning awards and working with record labels to help introduce new artists to the world.

Music is so important to the Black experience because for many of us it was our only way to express ourselves. During slavery, many Blacks sang hymns to help remind them of God's promise. This was the earliest form of black musical expression in America. Spirituals were originally an oral tradition and imparted Christian values while also defining the hardships of slavery. Gospel music originated in the Black church and has become a globally recognized

genre of popular music. In its earliest manifestations, gospel music functioned as an integral religious and ceremonial practice during worship services. Now, gospel music is also marketed commercially and draws on contemporary, secular sounds while still conveying spiritual and religious ideas. I truly believe that music has done more to bring people together than any individual because it speaks to the naked soul of a person. Music is so important to the Black experience that June is African American Music Appreciation Month! Created by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, this month celebrates the African American musical influences that comprise an essential part of our nation's treasured cultural heritage. Formerly called National Black Music Month, this celebration of African American musical contributions is re-established annually by presidential proclamation.



Tell us about your taste in music. What is your favorite music genre? Who are your favorite music artists, past or present? Why?

Personally, I don't have a favorite genre, my taste in music is so vast that it's hard to categorize it. It really depends on how I'm feeling at the time or the occasion. A few of my favorite artist are Bobby Womack, Outkast, PJ Morton, Marvin Sapp and Yiruma.

What is your favorite adult beverage?

It depends on how I'm feeling at the time or the occasion, although I do really enjoy a smoked cherry old fashion.