

ROY JAY

# BLACK MEETINGS

**\$40 BILLION**

# CHAIRMAN

In the Black convention and meeting business, he is an industry name. In Portland, Oregon his name is known for business entrepreneur endeavors, community service and just about being an all around nice guy that can still be tough as nails.

Last November, the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners elected Roy Jay as their new national chairman of the board. Only the fourth in the 23 year history of the organization which was originally founded by National Urban League meeting planner, Howard Mills and a hand full of other African-Americans that wanted to help each other become better educated in the growing convention, meeting and tourism industry.

Today, behind the leadership of previous organization chairmen, including Mills, John Crump and most recently Richard Snow, Jay becomes a first of his kind in an organization that has grown to enormous size and status over the years. Jay is the first chairman west of the Mississippi, and obviously not from a city that has a large African-American population — Portland, Oregon.

Jay, known as one of the industry's top movers and shakers, has set a footprint in NCBMP and many other associations for a number of years. He originally was a pioneer in the mid '90s in breaking down barriers in Portland, Oregon, where African-Americans had been excluded from the tourism and convention industry. "Our people were only looked upon as

clerical workers, housekeepers, waiters and bellmen in a multi billion dollar a year business." He was one of the first in the country to receive part of the convention and visitors bureau budget from room taxes and specifically for ethnic minority outreach and marketing.

## "Good To Great"

As the new Chairman, Jay says that he plans, with a lot of help from his board, members, colleagues and supporters to take the organization from "Good To Great" during his tenure. Known for his innovative and creative marketing, he plans to be inclusive of others both within and outside the organization.

Statistics show that African-Americans are still the top draw when it comes to money spent on conventions, business travel, family reunions and leisure travel topping nearly \$40 billion annually and on an upward mode. While the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners has a significant number of African-American organizations in their membership roster, Jay says that he wants to increase that by at least 25% over the next year.

Jay was one of the original members of the NAACP reciprocity committee that began to rate hotels in the mid '90s. Today, he says that there still has not been enough done to ensure economic empowerment and employment for African-Americans and others in management positions at hotels, convention bureaus, convention centers and tourism agencies across the country. "I do not intend to beat anyone over the head to force them to meet today's



growing minority ethnic empowerment efforts, but I will definitely encourage our members and other associations to pledge to the NCBMP motto coined originally by Howard Mills of "We Do Business With Our Friends."

Jay has been named by *Black Meetings & Tourism*, a leading national trade publication, as one of the nation's most influential African-Americans in the convention and tourism industry for nine consecutive years. It is the most of any other African-American individual since the California-based publication started the recognition 10 years ago. But you just won't see him at African-American events, "he's all over the place" says Clara Carter, a meeting planner from San Diego. Whether it's at ASAE, RCMA, a host of other industry association events, the 6 foot 4 inch baritone voice can be heard nearly a block away as he's doing what he does best.

Carter, who is a member of the San Diego chapter of MPI met Jay as a new member of NCBMP over two years ago and immediately recognized an opportunity if she could get him to come to San Diego to speak to the Multicultural Outreach of MPI for which she was the local chair.

"When asked he politely indicated yes,

## "Now I am going to show you how to start preparing to get your "OTHER CMP." "Certified Minority Planner,"

but it took nearly another year to get it on Jay's busy calendar. His appearance in May 2006 as the keynote speaker did not disappoint. He lived up to the headline and more as the mixed audience of African-American, White, Latino and Asian hospitality professionals, MPI members and other local business people heard a passionate, yet humorous speech about inclusiveness.

"How many of you have your "CMP" says Jay. Nearly half of the room at the San Diego Convention Center raised their hands. He quietly smiled and told them.. "Now I am going to show you how to start preparing to get your "OTHER CMP." "Certified Minority Planner," an area of expertise that most meeting planners, hotels and convention bureaus are lacking.

His vision includes an outreach to youth so they can understand the career potential of being in the hospitality industry. "I do not want to see our young people sitting around thinking that they are going to get a

sports scholarship for scoring points. It just does not happen. We have to get these young people ready now otherwise our history will reverse itself and we will be back to waiting tables, making beds, shining shoes and janitorial work in an industry that has made billions off the backs of our Black parents, grandparents and even great grandparents.

The new non-pay position as chair carries a lot of responsibilities according to the bylaws. The chair charts the course for the organization and helps set policy and procedures for upward mobility of the members as well as the organization's supporters.

Jay is married with five grown children, three grandchildren, two homes in Oregon and one in Puerto Vallarta Mexico. He's known by many of his close friends as "Mr. Circuit City" because he is a high-tech gadget man. It is not uncommon to see him carrying two cell phones and a Blackberry in his day-to-day routine in order to not

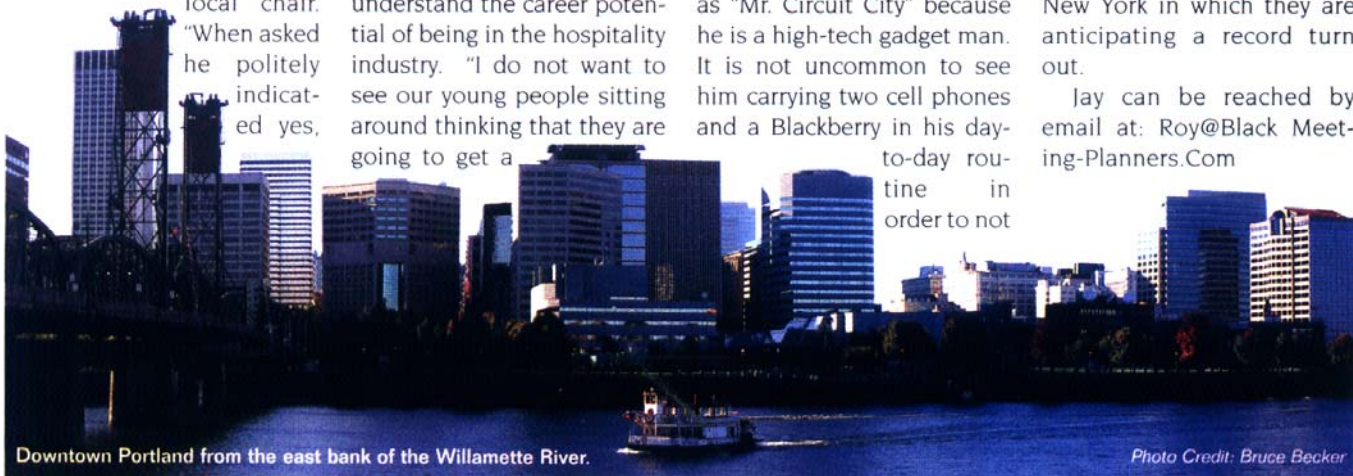
only communicate with NCBMP staffers, board and members, but also to manage the list of businesses that he either owns or operates.

He is a guy with a great sense of humor and a confidence about himself that exemplifies one of the reasons that he was elected as the national chairman of the organization. Ozzie Jenkins, President of the management company that handles many of the day-to-day activities for the organization says of the new chairman, "He has always been there when the organization has needed him, whether it's behind the scenes or having to fill in at the last minute to do a workshop with a presenter who missed a flight, you could always count on Roy Jay to be true to his word."

Andy Ingraham, executive director of the National Association of Black Hotel Owners and Operators based in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida was one of the first to congratulate Jay on his election and pledged the support of his organization and members, which includes billionaire hotel owner developer and business mogul Robert Johnson of BET fame.

NCBMP will hold their Spring 2007 Conference in May 15-20 in Niagara Falls, New York in which they are anticipating a record turn out.

Jay can be reached by email at: Roy@Black Meetings-Planners.Com



Downtown Portland from the east bank of the Willamette River.

Photo Credit: Bruce Becker