

## WHACC Luncheon • October 17, 2007

### Guest Speaker: Connie Atkins

**Connie Atkins** is the Managing Partner of Impactful Alliances, LLC and serves as the Executive Director of the Consortium of African American Organizations (CAAO). In her role at CAAO, she is responsible for the implementation of the mission and principles of this collaborative organization for the black professional organizations of Northeast Ohio. CAAO (pronounced K-O) acts as a conduit and collaborative point of reference to assist with entrepreneurial development, professional development, and leadership development for those organizations and their members. CAAO currently has 24 member organizations and 10 collaborative member organizations with over 6,000 active members and an outreach of over 30,000.

Ms. Atkins is a seasoned entrepreneur, a published author, a motivational speaker, an adjunct college professor, and an international business consultant, having served on many community boards, including the CuyahogaNext, Business Advisory Council of John Carroll University, the U.S. – South Africa Business Development Council, the Cleveland World Trade Association, the Greater Cleveland Minority Technology Council, the Northern Ohio District Export Council, the Cleveland Job Corps, the SBA Advisory Council, Cleveland Skilled Industries, Cleveland Bridge Builders Advisory Council, NorTech Advisory Council, the Supplier Diversity Initiative Council of Case Western Reserve University, and others.

As the owner of a consulting and training company, Ms. Atkins wrote and facilitated training curriculum on 25 subjects, including an 11 chapter self-paced training manual for investment associates, meeting leadership training manual, and administrative training programs and documentation for government entities, as well as for the financial, industrial, and medical environments in the private sector.

As an international business consultant, Ms. Atkins led two trade missions to South Africa and was selected to serve on a Bi-national Commission as an advisor to Secretary of Commerce Daley and Vice President Gore on \$2.6 billion economic development budget between the USA and South Africa and participated in developing the first Trade Initiative Framework Agreement between the U.S. and South Africa since the end of apartheid with Vice President Gore, Secretary Daley, and President Thabo Mbeki.

Ms. Atkins is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of John Carroll University and a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Cuyahoga Community College and has received numerous honors and awards, including:

- MLK Community Service Award from the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Greater Cleveland Partnership, 2007
- Athena Finalist, Inside Business Magazine, 2006
- Toast of Midtown Award for Community Service, 2006
- Community Impact Award, Black Pages Ohio, 2006
- BrownFlynn *Circle of 10* finalist out of 63 nonprofits in Northeast Ohio “for defying the traditional definitions of creativity and excellence – thinking outside the box to ensure the healthy future of their organizations,” March 2006
- Community Impact Award, Cleveland Northeast Ohio Chapter of the National Black MBA Assn., 2005
- Woman of Note, Crain’s Cleveland Business, 2005
- Panelist, National Town Hall Panel, aired on C-Span and Word Network, PowerNetworking 2003
- Hall of Fame Inductee, Salem High School Alumni Association, Salem, Ohio (1999)
- International Business Development Award, Cleveland World Trade Association (1998)
- Outstanding Business Services and Community Leadership Award, Kaleidoscope Magazine (1996)
- Fifty of Our Finest Award, John Carroll University, School of Business (1995)
- Graduate, Leadership Cleveland (1995)
- Minority Service Firm of the Year, City of Cleveland (1992)
- Inducted into National Jesuit Honor Society, Alpha Sigma Nu (1992)
- Honoree, Black History Month, East Ohio Gas Company (1991)
- Business Woman of the Year, Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., Epsilon Chapter (1989)
- Featured in articles by - The Cleveland Plain Dealer, Crain’s Cleveland Business, The Call and Post, Western Reserve Business Review, Kaleidoscope Magazine, Inside Business, Northern Ohio Live, Cleveland Enterprise, John Carroll Alumni Journal, Cuyahoga Community College, The Salem News, The Morning Journal, the SBA Annual Report, and a variety of customer / client publications.