



**“Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now”**

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In 5th Year, My Dream for Hip Hop

It was all a dream. Salt n Pepa and Heavy D in a limousine. Hanging pictures on my wall..... I share the late Notorious B.I.G’s sentiments as he described his undying love for Hip Hop in his multi-platinum hit ‘Juicy.’ What is your Hip Hop dream?

I went from Lucious J to Kandi with a K to Flygirl Lady Jay, but my most important title is president of the Hip Hop Union. My dream was to build an organization that provides the necessary tools, resources and services to activate and assist businesses and entrepreneurs who are dedicated to preserving the legacy and expanding the reach of Hip Hop culture. The grueling task of bringing a world of chaos to its fullest potential has been both troublesome and rewarding. Troublesome because it is the body of Hip Hop that does not let itself grow.

That’s largely because Hip Hop was not united. How could it be when Hip Hop has connected to the world by its sounds and lyrics? How do we find out what the body of Hip Hop is thinking when it comes to politics, education, police brutality and social welfare?

We usually hear particular perspectives from artists who garner attention because they have sold millions of records but still have warped perspectives. The same can be said of self-appointed leaders who use the platform to increase their reach and, in the end, slow down the advancement of the community. Their goal is to sidetrack what they perceive as



**HIP HOP
UNION**

Jineea
Butler

competition, many of their ideas and perspectives are stolen from the citizens who tirelessly work to make change.

You never know what someone has sacrificed for the love of Hip Hop. It’s a love so deep you can’t shake it, it can break your heart, it can fulfill your dreams and sadly in the cases of Shakir Stewart of

On this 5th anniversary, I make a toast to all the artists, entrepreneurs, educators, executives, interns, activists and enthusiast who have participated in the formation of the Hip Hop Union

Def Jam and Violator Management founder Chris Lighty, it can be the stress and death of you. Hip Hop has been a way out for young Black and Brown folks for more than four decades. It is the manifestation of desires and determination to succeed at the highest levels by any means necessary. It entails constantly lobbying for positions and begging to be heard by the outlets that refuse to publish your work or music after you have spent so much time creating it.

The time has come for us to organize and invest in the success of our people, stimulate economic growth and force love among one another. On Sept. 19, 2009, the Hip Hop Union was born to fill that need. A group of 22 individuals from different organizations and affiliations across the country sat down at Long Island University in Brooklyn, N.Y. for a meeting that would change the world in the name of Hip Hop yet again. One of the many goals proposed on that day was to work for Hip Hop to be recognized and invited to sit among world leaders.

Understanding the dynamics of the Hip Hop industry, we invested five years in researching and cul-

tivating the services members of the Hip Hop Union will soon be able to enjoy. We wanted to make sure that we were representing the people and not only ourselves. We knew that our selfless efforts would be scrutinized by everybody who considers themselves an authority when it comes to Hip Hop. It is natural for people to shun the work and stop forward progression of fellow constituents; we should not have to manipulate each other to succeed.

We should have the confidence

and intelligence to love one another and support our respective dreams. Why is my dream more important than yours, when we work together things happen faster? I am proud to announce that the Hip Hop Union kicked off its year-long celebration of the 5th anniversary of our public outreach in Seoul, South Korea. We discussed how Hip Hop is the only art form that has transcended every race, religion and cultural barrier across the globe.

On this 5th anniversary, I make a toast to all the artists, entrepreneurs, educators, executives, interns, activists and enthusiast who have participated in the formation of the Hip Hop Union. There is only one way to describe you, the way Steve Jobs described his Apple employees:

‘Here’s to the crazy ones the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes, the ones who see things differently they’re not fond of rules , they have no respect for the status quo, you can quote them, you can disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. Almost the only thing you can’t do is ignore them, because they change things they push the human race forward, while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius, because the people who were crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

Jineea Butler, founder of the Social Services of Hip Hop and the Hip Hop Union, can be reached at jineea@gmail.com or Tweet her at @flygirlldadyjay.

Silicon Valley Must Embrace Diversity

While the number of African American, Latino and women consumers of Internet and broadband products and services is rising, their numbers at the major Silicon Valley companies continue to lag way behind. After years of resisting disclosure, tech giants such as Apple, Facebook, Yahoo and Google recently released their employment diversity numbers. As we’ve long suspected, they show a striking lack of inclusion.

According to published figures, at Google, 3 percent of its staff are Hispanic and 2 percent are Black. Both Yahoo and Facebook reported that Hispanics and Blacks make up 4 percent and 2 percent of their workplaces, respectively. When Apple makes an announcement, as in its recent introduction of the iPhone 6, it usually wants the world to stand up and take notice. This was likely not the case with the release of its diversity numbers last month, which showed the company is 55 percent White, 15 percent Asian, 11 percent Hispanic and 7 percent Black. In his statement upon release of the report, Apple CEO Tim Cook candidly admitted, “I’m not satisfied with the numbers on this page.” This acknowledgment is a first step, but the question for Cook and his Silicon Valley counterparts is: What are you going to do about it?

For years, Silicon Valley has used the specious claim of being a



**TO BE
EQUAL**

Marc Morial

“meritocracy” to explain the lack of diversity in its ranks. It has never been true that African Americans, Latinos or women are somehow less able to excel at high tech jobs. It is true that communities of color and women continue

the necessary supports and opportunities available to them to succeed in STEM-related class work and exposing students to STEM-related careers.

But as Freda Kapor Klein, co-chair of the Kapor Center for Social Impact, explains, “The reality is that most of the barriers are structural...our sector is permeated by biases, both subtle and not so subtle.” Her co-chair and husband, Mitch Kapor, the designer of Lotus 1-2-3, adds, “Even as companies scramble to find workers in the most competitive hiring market in recent memory, most are

website states, “We know that diverse, talented and dedicated individuals are critical to our success, so we look for people from various backgrounds and give them opportunities to grow...we serve our customers better when we build diversity into all we do.”

Verizon has also made great strides in both employee and supplier diversity. According to Verizon Chairman and CEO, Lowell McAdam “A diverse workplace is one of Verizon’s biggest strengths as a global innovation leader. Our employees’ unique backgrounds and perspectives are key to our success in delivering technology solutions that create value for our customers, shareholders and society.”

Silicon Valley companies must not only make similar statements, they must make similar commitments. They can begin by developing comprehensive diversity plans to cover hiring, procurement, governance and philanthropy. As major consumers of technology, people of color and women should also have a fair share of the jobs and wealth that Silicon Valley generates.

Marc H. Morial, former mayor of New Orleans, is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

“The industry that bills itself a meritocracy actually looks more like a mirrortocracy.”

— *Mitch Kapor, co-chair of the Kapor Center for Social Impact*

to be underrepresented in the attainment of science and engineering degrees. The National Urban League is working to increase those numbers with efforts such as Project Ready STEM, which is supporting 10 Project Ready STEM sites across the nation. The sites are successfully operating STEM programs for nearly 300 middle or high school students, with the goals of ensuring that urban students have

continuing to bring aboard people who look like they do.”

It is not enough to lament the numbers; Silicon Valley must be more intentional about increasing diversity. The industry would do well to follow the example of some of the large telecom companies, which have taken proactive measures in recent years to increase diversity within their organizations. For example, AT&T’s Workforce Inclusion