

**News**

**Obituary: Aaron Brown**

Oct. 20, 2026 - Aug. 28, 2016

**A**aron Brown was the first born of 10 children to Aaron Sr. and Edna Mae Brown in Bell, La. on Oct. 20, 1926. His family moved to Houston when he was four-years old where he attended school and church.



Aaron Brown

After graduating from Phillis Wheatley High School in 1944 he helped his family supplement their income by selling chicken and fish until he was drafted into the U.S. Army where he served as Private First Class until he received an honorable discharge. He attended Southern University, but later transferred to Fisk University where he worked as a railroad porter and attended classes until graduation.

In 1955 he moved to Portland, Ore., and set up a shoe shine stand in the Benson Hotel in downtown Portland before becoming employed by the State of Oregon's Social Welfare Department. While employed there, he enrolled and attended Lewis and Clark College's Northwestern School of Law night program. In 1959 he graduated from law school and immediately passed the Oregon State Bar. He opened his law office in the hub of the Black community at the intersection of North Williams Avenue and Sacramento Street.

In 1968, then-Portland Mayor Terry Schruck appointed Aaron as a pro tem judge and later made the appointment permanent, thus he became Oregon's first Black judge. In 1971 then Gov. Tom McCall appointed him to District Court. He successfully ran for re-election four times, facing opposition only

once. He retired in 1995 but continued to preside as a Circuit Court judge as needed in multiple Oregon counties for several more years.

Aaron was very active in many community organizations, including the Urban League, NAACP, Oregon Black Lawyers, Kiwanis, American Bar Association, Oregon State Bar, Multnomah Bar Association, AFL-

CIO's Executive Council, Boy Scouts of America and the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity Boule' — any other organizations.

Two children were born during his first marriage, Gregory A. (Angela), and Yvette D. Later he met and married Alvenice Mines in 1970 and adopted her son Eric V (Renee). He leaves behind four grand-children: Marquise, Autumn, Erica, Quincy, and three great-grandchildren. He is survived by two brothers: Karl Brown (Betty Ann) and Frank Brown as well as one sister-in-law, Corinne Coleman and one brother-in-law, Smyth Alford and many other relatives.

After retiring, Aaron and Alvenice re-located to Holly Springs, Miss., in 1999 where they resided until his death on Aug. 28, 2016.

During their years together they enjoyed the love and friendship of many friends in Oregon, Washington, and Mississippi. Aaron passed away on at Alliance HealthCare System facility in Holly Springs, Miss. He was one of a kind, and will be truly missed and always be loved and remembered by his family and many friends and colleagues.

**From Banks to Beauty Products The #BuyBlack Movement Is Real**

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire Contributor

**I**t's a trend that many are hoping won't just turn into a passing fad.

Late last month, Essence magazine noted that after years of slow-burning idealism, #BuyBlack has seen a community-wide takeoff.

And, as the holiday season moves into full swing, the #BuyBlack campaign has led many to imagine what would happen if African Americans — the largest consumer group of color in the United States with an estimated \$1.2 trillion in spending power — routinely demonstrated allegiance to the 2.6 million Black-owned businesses that exist in America.

"I think the #BuyBlack initiative is a good move for the Black community and not just because of dollars and cents," said Walt L. Jones III, principal of the SEQ Advisory Group, a Bethesda, Maryland-based management consulting and advisory firm dedicated to helping businesses achieve the highest level of performance and efficiency. "There's the deeper perspective of reinvesting in our own community and building up the local businesses, some that are owned by our friends, neighbors, and relatives."

Jones continued: "Similar to the #ECStrong initiative, a community can only heal, recover, and persevere if its residents are willing to make an investment in its infrastructure."

The idea of Black capitalism goes back many decades, according to an NPR report which cited the advocacy of civil rights activists Booker T. Washington and Marcus Garvey for African Americans to create and do business with each other to build wealth within their own communities.

The #BuyBlack movement has helped Black-owned banks to realize substantial gains. In one month, this summer, Washington, D.C.-based In-



Richelieu Dennis, the founder and CEO of Sundial Brands, the largest Black-owned beauty company in the country, sees the positive effects of the #BuyBlack movement.

dustrial Bank opened more than 1,500 new accounts with deposit balances of about \$2.7 million — or more than the number of accounts that are usually opened in a six-month period.

At Baltimore-based Harbor Bank, new accounts totaled about \$10 million in deposits, said Joseph Haskins Jr., the bank's president and chairman.

"Because of the [#BuyBlack] movement, we've received many telephone calls from individuals and organizations who've shown a lot of interest," Haskins said. "Once folks learned or discovered that we are Black-controlled, things took off."

The idea of supporting the community is vital for all involved, said Shahara Wright, an attorney and business development strategist with The CEO Effect, LLC, a Stafford, Texas-based organization that provides small and mid-sized companies with legal and business strategies including entity formation, mergers and acquisitions, investor packages and contracts.

"I think it only works when it is local. Many people point to Jewish and Asian communities, which seem to have cohesive purchasing power to support their own," Wright said. "The #BuyBlack seeks to create that same idea...it ultimately has to be a community that you support consistently."

Sonja Thompkins, a brick & mortar business strategist and founder of SincerelySonja.com, said #BuyBlack is a trend for consumers of color to consciously spend their money within their own communities and particularly with Black-owned businesses, a welcome movement.

"I believe it gives people a sense of pride to see businesses like ours that offer an array of quality products in our own communities," Thompkins said. "And, because most people are going to spend the money anyway, the recent occurrences of injustice make people want to do something. Everyone's not protesting in the street. They have chosen to make a statement economically."

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