



## Rainbow PUSH Coalition Automotive Project

-An initiative of the Citizenship Education Fund-

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### Rainbow PUSH Global Automotive Summit Draws Top Automotive Executives To Discuss Commitment, Access and Accountability for Ethnic Minorities

DETROIT, MI – The Rainbow PUSH/CEF Automotive Project, an initiative of the Citizenship Education Fund, will hold its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Rainbow PUSH Global Automotive Summit on Oct. 8-9, at the MGM Grand Detroit Meeting and Events Center, 1777 Third St., in Detroit, Michigan. The theme, “Shifting into High Gear: Commitment, Access and Accountability,” will focus on the release of the second RPC Automotive Diversity Scorecard, as well as, a research paper, entitled, “Structural Racism in America.” More than 500 automotive executives, entrepreneurs, suppliers, dealers, consumers, government officials, automotive manufacturers, tech companies, advertising agencies, media outlets and others will join together to discuss strengthening and creating opportunities in the automotive industry for people of color.

“Minority companies need a short-term plan for survival and a long-term critical path to success with measurable goals, targets and timetables,” said Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr., president and founder, Rainbow PUSH Coalition. “Many of our award-winning minority companies are at an economic crossroad that is hinged on a plan for growth. There is not a talent deficit among minority companies; there is an access and commitment deficit from auto manufacturers. It is time to shift the paradigm and hold the automotive industry accountable.”

Highlights of the Summit include:

On Thursday, Oct. 8, from 6-9 p.m., Rainbow PUSH will join with The Michigan Majority Coalition to hold a **TechTalks 2020** session. Speakers include Navarrow Wright, president, Maximum Leverage Solutions; Travis Mason, public policy and government affairs, Google; Jewel Burks, CEO, Partpic; and Angel Gambino, CEO, The Alchemists Collective. The evening event is free, however, registration is required.

The full-day Summit begins with the **Leadership Town Hall Breakfast and Panel Discussion** on Friday, Oct. 9. Simon Nagata, exec. VP and chief administrative officer, Toyota North America, will give the opening address followed by a panel discussion, **entitled, “Raising Our Voices on Systemic Structural Inequalities in Corporate America.”** Panelists include: Dr. Ben Chavis, president & CEO, National Newspaper Publishers Association, Joset Wright-Lacy, president, National Minority Supplier Development Council; Cheryl Pearson-McNeil, senior VP, Strategic Community Alliances and Consumer Engagement, Nielsen; and Tawana Bain, CEO, New Age Communications.

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The **Business and Education Awards Luncheon**, hosted by Bankole Thompson, op-ed columnist, *The Detroit News*, and host, *Redline*, WDET-Detroit Public Radio, will center around a Fireside Chat with Rev. Jackson and Earl “Butch” Graves, Jr., president and CEO, Black Enterprise Magazine. Their discussion will focus on “**Corporate Diversity—Still a Work in Progress.**” Immediately following the discussion, the GM Foundation will present scholarship awards to 25 deserving students.

Throughout the day there will be concurrent panel discussions focusing on purchasing, human resources, advertising and marketing, professional services, automotive technology, a dealer’s roundtable and a special Women’s Exchange featuring Be Your Own Brand CEO Shelia Coates. Highlighted speakers include:

- Ken Barrett, chief diversity officer, General Motors
- Ron Busby, president, U.S. Black Chamber of Commerce
- Paul Edwards, VP of Marketing, Chevrolet
- Cooper Ericksen, VP of Vehicle Marketing and Communications, Toyota
- Felicia Fields, group VP, Human Resources and Corporate Services, Ford Motor Company
- Kim Hill, managing director and president, HWA Analytics
- Mahesh Kodumudi, executive VP, of Purchasing, Volkswagen of America
- Tom Lake, VP, North American Purchasing, Honda North America
- John Martin, senior VP, Mfg., Supply Chain Management and Purchasing, Nissan N.A.
- Lars Minns, head of talent acquisition, Mercedes-Benz USA
- Erwin Raphael, general manager, Western Region, Hyundai Motor America
- Robert Wallace, founder and chairman, BITH Group
- Perry Watson, III, newly-appointed chair, NAMAD

The evening activities provide many networking opportunities beginning with the **Living Legends and Emerging Leaders Awards**. The honorees include, **Living Legends**: Chuck Morrison (Urban Sports and Entertainment Group), Jeanette Abraham (JMA Global) and Leven Weiss (FCA). **Emerging Leaders** are: Anika Jackson (Jackson Asset Management), Eddie Hall, III (Hall Automotive Group) and Monte Perkins (Merollis Chevrolet). Meanwhile, special award categories include: **Advocate Award**: Jim Colon (Toyota Motor Sales) and Alva Mason (Toyota Motor Sales); **Philanthropic Award**, Zafar Brooks (Hyundai Motor America); and Shawn Thompson (Ford Motor Company) will receive a special **Strategic Partner Award** recognition.

The Summit will wrap up the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Michigan Minority Business Week** activities with an After Party featuring a special performance by **Doug. E. Fresh**, the original “human beat box.”

For more information and to register for the event activities, visit [www.automotiveproject.org](http://www.automotiveproject.org).

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About Rainbow PUSH Coalition

*Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a multi-racial, multi-issue, progressive, international organization that was formed in December 1996 by the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. through the merging of two organizations he founded: Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity), established in 1971, and the Rainbow Coalition, was established in 1984. With headquarters in Chicago and offices in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and Oakland, the organization works to make the American Dream a reality for all citizens, while advocating for peace and justice around the world. RPC is dedicated to improving the lives of all people by serving as a voice for the voiceless. Its mission is to protect, defend and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields while promoting peace and justice around the world. For more information about the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, go to [www.rainbowpush.org](http://www.rainbowpush.org). Follow Rainbow PUSH Coalition on Twitter: @RPCoalition. To join the conversation about the Rainbow PUSH Global Automotive Summit, use #RPCGAS2015.*

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