

The Joshua Smith Story

During his 30 years as an entrepreneur, Joshua Smith has danced with both triumph and disaster. And he's capitalized on them both.



Smith, a former educator, used \$15,000 of his own money to start MAXIMA, the information technology and data management firm he opened in 1978. As MAXIMA's President and CEO, Smith watched his investment grow into a \$60 million enterprise with 1,500 employees in 30 states by the mid-1980s. The multimillion-dollar data processing and computer services company was heralded nationwide as one of the top African American owned and one of the fastest growing firms in the country. Smith - charismatic, politically savvy, insightful and forward-thinking - was recognized nationwide for his views on minority business development. Then, as now, Smith volunteered his time to promote small and minority business development.

And then disaster struck. During a civil lawsuit filed in December, 1993, Smith accused three employees of diverting funds from MAXIMA into an unauthorized company and fired them. A countersuit was filed launching a very bitter, very costly and very public battle. A settlement in the case was eventually negotiated, but MAXIMA had lost many of its government contracts and the business was in turmoil. Smith declared bankruptcy in 1998.

It took some time but eventually the smoke cleared and the pity party ended. Today, Smith is Chairman and Managing Partner of the Coaching Group, LLC, a management consulting company he founded in 1999. Smith combines the lessons he learned from his heyday and his heartbreak to coach businesses to success and help other CEOs stay focused on their goals and prevent the kind of problems that brought down MAXIMA.

Today, "things have never been better," says Smith. "I always had that interest and always helped people who called on me for assistance. I've always shared what I know...that's just how I am.

As painful as it was, Smith believes his MAXIMA experience gave him a new lease on life. "When you're going through a negative experience, you have two choices," says Smith. "You can become stressed and upset, or you can learn something from the experience and consider the fact that God may be trying to lead you in another direction. That whole experience probably saved my life. It allowed me to know what's valuable and what's important and it allowed me to realize the presence of God in my life."

"Soon, I will be in a better position (financially) than I was with MAXIMA."

Smith, born in tiny Loveland, Ohio near Cincinnati, was a cum laude graduate of Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. He later did graduate work in law and business administration at the University of Akron and Central Michigan University. After a stint as a high school science teacher in Washington, D.C., and Smith went on to teach biology and chemistry at Central State University and the University of Akron. Both schools are in Ohio.

Smith's passion for the unknown sparked his interest in an up and coming field - information technology. This curiosity about the role computers would play in the business world, spurred him to accept a job to head the new Center for Information Systems at Akron where he was charged with automating some of the university's information systems.

It was not long before Smith left the university to become manager of the data book division of Plenum Publishing in New York. From there, he accepted a job at the American Society for Information Science in Washington, DC. Smith eventually became executive director. He saw a trend developing - applying information technology to the world of business and decided to learn more about business management. Smith took courses in association management at the University of Delaware and business management at Central Michigan University.

In 1977, Smith left the American Society of Information Science to become vice-president at Herner & Co., Smith, a consulting firm. After a few years, he began to notice that local governments and federal agencies had special needs when it came to information technology and data management. More importantly, Smith realized that he had enough knowledge and experience to provide these governmental agencies with the services they needed. "I knew it was a risk," says Smith. "But by that time in my life, I was comfortable taking risks."

Smith is a member of the board of directors of Federal Express, Caterpillar, Allstate and the National Black Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the United Methodist Foundation. He serves on the National Advisory Board for Sodexo, Inc and is a trustee for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the George H. Bush Presidential Library. From 1989-1992, Smith also served as Chairman of the US Commission on Minority Business Development and as a member of the Maryland Stadium Authority (appointed by three different governors). In 2003, he . Smith chaired the Task Force on Minority Business Reform for the Governor's Commission on Minority Business Reform. In 2004, he received the National Director's Legacy Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce and was the 2005 winner of the Reginald Lewis Lifetime Achievement Award presented by the MD/DC Minority Supplier Development Council.

Smith isn't the only one in his family to change direction. His wife, Jacqueline Jones Smith, went from being a successful lawyer to pastor of the Good Hope Union United Methodist Church. "She's my hero," Smith says. "Over the years, she's made such a sacrifice to support me in my work. Now, I'm the spouse of a pastor."

Smith is working hard to be supportive. "This is a humbling experience for me," he says. "I'm not in the seat of authority or the center of attention. But when I do something, I want to be the best." Smith says he's getting help from the best coach available: The CEO of his Soul. "I can just feel God working in and through me. He makes you humble and he makes you whole."

The Dorothy Brunson Story



Of all the noteworthy people who have been chronicled on the radio and TV stations she's owned, Dorothy Brunson missed turning the spotlight on one of the most remarkable women in media. "No, I haven't written my book yet," she says with a laugh.

She should give it some thought. Brunson, a media trailblazer, author, lecturer and consultant who has mastered one challenge after another, is not one to pass up a lucrative opportunity. The Dorothy Brunson Story could be her biggest money maker yet.

After 46 years in the media industry, Brunson, has a compelling story to tell. Not only is she the first African American woman to own a radio station and operate a TV station in the U.S., she still has two TV holdings – Channel 54 in Roanoke and a Fox affiliate in Montana. She also owns a PR firm and insurance company, finances real estate development projects along the East Coast, is a business consultant for up-and-coming minority companies and a mentor for young people entering the job market. Through her missionary works, she has helped to build a library, school and hospital in Ghana, West Africa and a school in Guyanna, South Africa.

Brunson, who graduated from Empire State College in New York, began her communications career as an assistant comptroller at radio station WWRL in New York City in 1961. Seven years later, Brunson became part-owner of Howard Sanders Advertising, the first black-owned advertising agency on Madison Avenue. She moved on three years later to become general manager and vice president of the African American-owned Inner City Broadcasting Network. She ran five radio stations, became a key ICB investor and boosted the company's revenues from \$189,000 to \$22 million her six years there.

In May of 1979, Dr. Brunson purchased three radio stations and left ICB to run Brunson Communications, Inc (BCI). She sold the stations in the early 1990s to finance an even larger media venture – the purchase of WGTW TV48 in Philadelphia, a full power TV station that provided 24-hour programming, 365 days a year to a tri-state area. Brunson is proud that WGTW helped hundreds of minorities "get into all aspects of the broadcasting business – from cameramen, to editors to on-screen talent." And she, as owner "opened the eyes of the general market to the fact that blacks and women can compete and run an efficient station and be profitable." After more than a decade of ownership, she sold TV 48 in 2004. "It was getting more and more difficult to compete with the larger multi-station owners," Brunson said. "I opted to sell it while the value was still there."

Brunson is constantly reinventing herself. Brunson has served as consultant on business and communications issues for major financial institutions and has testified before Congress on a range of issues related to black radio. She has also lectured on business, economic development, communications, human and women rights, religious freedom

and affirmative action. In February, 2006, Dr. Brunson won the Black History Award for Business during the 2006 Governor's Salute to Black History Month at the Reginald Lewis Museum in Baltimore. She has also been honored by the National Association of Media Women, American Women in Radio & TV and the National Council of Negro Women. She has been featured on numerous television programs and in national magazines like Time, Newsweek, Black Enterprise and Essence. Eleven years ago, Dr. Brunson received an honorary doctorate from Clarke Atlanta University.

At an age when most people think of retirement, Brunson not only runs her two TV stations, operated under the banner of Brunson Ross, LLC, her real estate company (Brunson Ross, Inc.), she is also developing a media center at Three North Central Avenue with office space for "TV production firms, internet companies, booking agents, even entertainment finance companies," Brunson says. In Pennsylvania, Brunson Ross, Inc is developing condos in Manayunk in a little community called Philadelphia City.

Today, Brunson is highly regarded as a business forecaster and analyst, someone who can see market trends before they develop and who can create a successful company out of a roughly drafted business plans. "We've turned a lot of businesses around," Brunson says.

She especially excited to serve as a mentor and consultant for young African American women get their businesses established. "Most of them have already stepped out but don't have a long range processing plan," Brunson says. "I work with them to get access to capital and to network with other people who do the same things." And then there's her consulting work with the Maryland Center for Arts and Technology – a workforce training program for underemployed and unemployed Baltimore youth age 17-21. "Our job is to groom them until they're ready to get into the workforce," says Brunson.

Despite her varied business interests, Brunson takes time to enjoy her two sons and five grandchildren. She collects black dolls (she has more than 400) and loves to shop for antiques. She's also offered her home as a safe haven for foster children.

Although she says she's "retired," one of Brunson's days could test the mettle of a woman half her age. Brunson has no plans of laying down her business acumen and money-making skills. She's held in high esteem - mostly because of her achievements and her desire to reach out as she's moved up. "I'm a great believer that if you're going to change your life, you should change somebody else's life as well," Brunson says. "I'm constantly amazed at the kind of return it all brings back to me."

The Raymond V. Haysbert Story

Raymond V. Haysbert, former CEO of Parks Sausage, learned how to deal with his detractors more than five decades ago. When people told Haysbert and his partner Henry Parks that they, as black men, would never be able to market their sausage throughout the U.S. during the racially tense 1950s, “I didn’t listen to them,” Haysbert said. The way he saw it “It was a problem. I was a problem solver. Let’s solve this problem.”



Facing the problem, finding a solution and ultimately beating the odds - that’s the Haysbert way. Because of his willingness to share his 55-years worth of entrepreneurial experience and insights with others in the Greater Baltimore Community, a new generation of minority business hopefuls are benefiting from his tact, honesty and fearlessness.

During Parks early years, when some chain stores and supermarket refused to sell the sausage made by African Americans, “We had to accept racism as a fact,” Haysbert said. “We got around it by sending white salesmen into some areas and black salesmen into others. We didn’t tell anyone what race we were and a lot of distributors and chain stores didn’t know we were black. We let our advertising speak for itself - the people who did our commercials were white, a red haired freckled face Caucasian boy appeared in our ads. We sent sausage to the White House and made the most of the letter we got back from Mrs. Eisenhower. We took out an ad in the New Yorker Magazine.”

Today, Parks Sausage is fondly remembered for its heyday - when it was the most well-known black-owned businesses in the country, when it was doing well enough to be a sponsor the 1955 World Series. And let’s not forget that familiar commercial “More Parks sausage, Mom. Please!” In 1969, Parks became the first black-owned company in U.S. history to go public - a great source of pride for Haysbert. After posting its impressive series of minority business firsts, Park Sausage sadly closed its doors in 1995, 43 years after it opened.

In 2007, Haysbert, 87, is defying the notion that people his age should stop working and go into retirement. Nothing could be further from the mind of this wily, astute and active businessman who has overcome some serious health problems (prostate cancer, a 1994 heart attack) and who now serves as a poster boy for staying active.

Haysbert is CEO of the Forum Caterers, the family-owned business that recorded \$4.5 million in sales in 2006. Although Haysbert still works with the business two days a week, it’s actually run by two of his children - Brian Haysbert is VP operations and daughter Nikita, VP of sales. The Forum Caterers and Phillips Seafood jointly run a restaurant at BWI Airport in Baltimore. The family also runs a joint venture with Smarte Carte, BWI’s baggage cart vending operation.

And then, there are Haysbert’s civic responsibilities. This consummate community volunteer is president of the President’s Roundtable and chairman of the board of the Baltimore Urban League and Greater Baltimore Black Chamber of Commerce. Haysbert is also co-chairman of the Strategic Alliance, a brainstorming group that harnesses “the people power of the

church, the money power of the business community and the political power of the Black Caucus” to address some of the cities most pressing issues.” Over the years, Haysbert co-founded two banks - Advance Federal (1970) and Harbor Bank (1982) - and is a Director Emeritus at Verizon. In 1991, President George H. Bush awarded Haysbert the National Minority Entrepreneur and Manufacturer of the Year award. In 1995, he got a similar honor from Dow Jones.

He’s widely revered throughout Baltimore’s academic circle and has three programs that bear his name. The Raymond Haysbert Center for Nonprofit Excellence, located near Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, is designed to pass on management and technical know-how to urban nonprofits. The Haysbert Institute for Professional Management at Coppin State uses lectures, workshops and seminars to help supervisors, managers and executives and help them develop the management skills they need. Haysbert also uses this as his forum for giving advice to minority entrepreneurs.

The Raymond V. Haysbert Research Center at Coppin State, opened in 2004, provides applied and qualitative research for scholars, business, and political leaders in the areas of healthcare, technology, intervention methods for youth, and criminal justice. And for the last five years, Haysbert has taught more than 700 students during his twice-weekly classes at the Edge Business and Technical Center on Maryland Ave. in Baltimore.

Haysbert, born in a slum Cincinnati in 1920, was the fourth of eight children. By the time he was eight, three of his siblings had died and his father moved away forcing he and his three other brothers to go to work to help support their family. Despite growing up poor, “I knew I would be significant,” Haysbert said. “I knew I would be a first-class business executive. And I wanted to help society and make a difference in people’s lives.”

After graduating from high school, Haysbert enlisted in an ROTC program at Wilberforce University in Ohio. After World War II broke out, he left school, volunteered for the service and wound up in Aviation School. He was later placed with the black 332nd Fighter Group, the combat unit of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Haysbert, who learned how to fly four different aircraft, spent three years with the Airmen in Italy. Today, he is a proud member of the Tuskegee Airmen’s East Coast Chapter.

Once he left the service, Haysbert took advantage of the GI bill to finish his degree in mathematics from Wilberforce College in Ohio and went on to get degrees in accounting and business from nearby Central State and a power engineering degree from the University of Cincinnati in 1947. Through the years, he won an Engineer of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award and honorary doctorates from the University of Maryland and Sojourner-Douglass College.

Haysbert married Carol Roberts, his college sweetheart, right before he went to work in the sausage company started by his friend Henry Parks. When he’s not consulting, Haysbert spends time with Carol, their four children and six grandchildren.

He’ll keep moving as fast as he can, trying hard to outdistance himself from another detractor: That would be Father Time. “If you slow down, it will catch up with you,” he said with a laugh. “The mind and the body were meant to be used. You know what they say: ‘Use it or lose it.’ I’ve already made my choice.”