

# Rainbow PUSH, Rev. Jesse Jackson Seek Economic Reciprocity with KFC

The Rainbow PUSH Coalition is urging food service giant YUM! Brands to pay closer attention to diversity and inclusion.

According to the Rainbow PUSH Coalition's International Trade Bureau, there are 106 Black-owned Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) stores, out of more than 5200, while Blacks and Hispanics account for nearly one-third of the company's U.S. revenues.

"YUM! needs to do a better job of making sure that its franchisees look like its customers," said Randolyn Jones, director for the Southern Region of Rainbow PUSH's trade bureau in Atlanta, Ga.

Yum! Brands, Inc. is a Fortune 500 corporation which operates Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, A&W and Long John Silver's restaurants worldwide.

Minority franchisees claim that they have difficulty communicating with the company and that operating terms and conditions are inconsistent. They also said that the company refuses to hire and promote Black executives who understand the unique market conditions affecting their businesses.

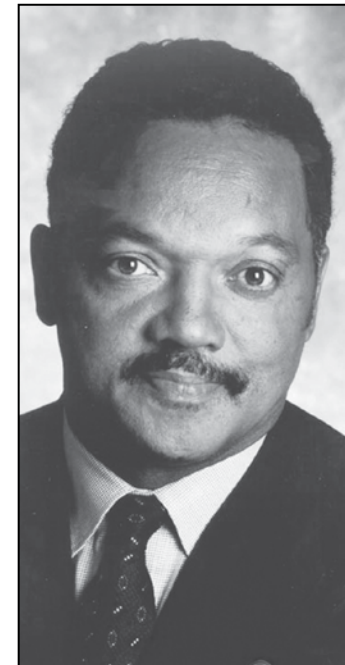
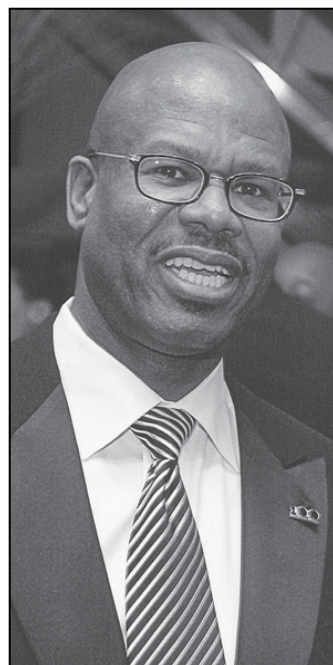
"We have a vested interest in YUM!," said Rainbow PUSH president and Founder Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

Breadbasket, which Jackson started as a wing of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), initiated the very first Black franchise operations in the United States.

"Some of today's minority franchisees are the same ones we worked with a generation ago. Others are children of that first generation. We do not intend to see their demise, given the strong consumer base that KFC has in our communities. We would rather have trading partners than boycott targets," Jackson said.

"So, we have written and seek to meet with YUM! officials. But we cannot tolerate being taken advantage of as consumers, [and] treated as second class citizens when it comes to business opportunities and jobs."

Jackson said that he has corresponded with YUM! and KFC executives. He intends to help organize a minority franchise



COURTESY PHOTO

Michael E. Melton, franchise owner and president of 100 Black Men of D.C. said he supports Rev. Jesse Jackson's (r) efforts to address inequities within Yum! Brands, Inc.

owners association and plans to attend the YUM! annual shareholders meeting in May in Lexington, Ky.

Jackson and Janice L. Mathis, executive director of Rainbow Push met with a group of Black YUM! franchisees who asked Jackson for help recently in Atlanta, Ga. The group also sent a letter to YUM! Chairman David Novak and requested an emergency meeting to discuss their concerns.

"Franchisees came from all over the country to participate in the meeting," Mathis said.

"During the meeting we developed a set of goals to be presented to KFC, but in fairness to YUM! and in accord with RPC protocol, we are giving YUM! a reasonable amount of time to respond before the issues are made public," she said.

"We are able to identify only 106 Black-owned KFC stores, out of more than 5200. The earlier report of 2900 stores was inaccurate. We are also conducting in-depth research on YUM! including Taco Bell and Pizza Hut. We expect further developments by the middle of next week," Mathis said.

Michael E. Melton, president of 100 Black Men of D.C. and the owner of 20 Taco Bells, five Five Guys and two Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants which are pending, said that he will

throw his weight behind Rainbow Push's efforts.

"I fully support this action. I have been in negotiations to purchase several Kentucky Fried Chicken [restaurants]. All of which are in urban areas in Atlanta. KFC has been extremely difficult to work with. Wanting to shift all the risk and expense to me while also demanding enormous front expense to remodel the stores before they can reopen," Melton said.

Melton said that the racism is subtle. White operators do not want the older stores in urban areas. Blacks tend to take those stores and then management makes it difficult and expensive to operate.

"When it became generally known that I was seeking to purchase KFC locations, I started receiving calls from existing operators warning me of the mine field that I was entering. The best way to bring the negative practices to light is to openly stand together and protest. I support Jesse Jackson in this effort and I will join the new minority franchise owners group," he said.

"Franchise groups serve a need in our communities, business ownership opportunities, jobs at all age levels and food at a low to reasonable price point. The opportunity to participate should be implemented fairly," Melton said. **WI**

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<p><b>Sat., April 10</b> 2 P.M.</p> <p><b>Fela Kuti:</b> <i>Music Is the Weapon</i> Documentary profiles the life of composer, Afrobeat pioneer and human rights activist Fela Kuti.</p> <p><b>Fri., April 16</b> 12 P.M.</p> <p><b>A Lost Picture Story: The Smithsonian-Chrysler 1926 Expedition to East Africa</b> Explore the relationships between animal capture, museum collecting and cinematic practices such as the picture story <i>Trapping Wild Game in Africa</i>, which chronicles the first expedition to collect living animals for the Smithsonian zoo.</p> <p><b>Sat., May 8</b> 10 A.M.-4 P.M.</p> <p><b>Making Connections</b> Try your hand at basket weaving!</p>	<p><b>Sat., May 15</b> 12 P.M.</p> <p><b>Artist Talk:</b> Paul Emmanuel The artist discusses his work <i>Transitions</i>, focusing on the importance of rites of passage and the way he uses photography and film to reveal aspects of his identity as a young white male living in post-apartheid South Africa.</p> <p><b>2 P.M.</b></p> <p><b>What in the World Are They Doing on Stage? or How to Watch a Modern Dance</b> Ever wonder how choreographers create dances or what the dances mean? Join Gesel Mason Performance Projects as they explore these questions in their interactive lecture/demonstration.</p>	<p><b>Fri., May 21</b> 12 P.M.</p> <p><b>New Photography from the Bamako Biennial</b> Lecture juxtaposes photographs from the 2010 biennial of African photography with the groundbreaking-yet-unseen efforts of Bamakois photographers to illuminate the critical and collaborative efforts currently facing African artists.</p> <p><b>For a complete listing of programs, visit <a href="http://africa.si.edu/calendar.html">africa.si.edu/calendar.html</a></b></p>
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