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Introduction

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Introduction

by James Jennings

We are proud to share with our readers the second annual issue of the *Trotter Review*. Since the first issue in 1984, the *Trotter Review* has grown to become a popular journal with a national and international readership. The journal has been particularly praised for its presentation and balance of scholarship informed by activism. We are currently planning future issues along the following themes: the experiences of Black children and the Black community with public schools; the historical and contemporary relationships between the Black and Native-American communities in the United States; and the role of Black educators in community service learning.

This issue, *Women of Color and Economic Development*, focuses on the experiences of women with economic development, a theme that is reflected in all the articles. This collection of articles shows clearly that a focus on the experiences of women in communities of color is a critical element for successful economic empowerment strategies and programs. The opening article by Russell Williams is an analysis of ownership patterns of minority women-owned businesses in Massachusetts. Williams' analysis illustrates that lumping together statistics on minority-owned businesses masks the differences of ownership between men and women and thus prevents appropriate policy responses to problems of minority women business owners. His analysis shows that minority women business owners are worse-off than minority men business owners and white women business owners. Similarly, Bette Woody and her team of researchers discuss the problem of the glass ceiling in higher education as it relates to African-American women. They point out that while statistics may show 'Blacks' as having made strides in obtaining faculty positions in reputable colleges, the reality is that African-American women are not part of these statistics. Elizabeth Sherman's article reflects upon the inequity inherent in the gender and race structure of the job market. Those jobs normally held by women and people of color are generally poorly compensated despite the skills, experience and level of difficulty required to perform them.

Black business does not just play a role in the economic development of a community – it is the very essence of the community in that it empowers both the

businessperson and the community. This is the theme of Stacy Sutton's article, "The Meaning of Black Entrepreneurship in Constructing Community." In the same vein, Jessica Gordon-Nemhard discusses the empowering nature of community projects that encourage democratic participation, and cites examples of successful cases from around the country. Marilyn Gittell and her co-authors also discuss women-led community development organizations (CDOs) and their contribution to community development.

Four articles in this issue relate to countries outside the U.S.; but the discussions clearly illustrate the interconnectedness of today's world. Carlos Ani's article emphasizes the need to stop looking at poverty through a gender-blind lens. Whether in developing or developed countries, women in poor households are the ones most affected by poverty. Anne Gathuo discusses the role of women in self-help-oriented community development in Kenya, and points out that cuts in government spending and the reliance of women as the sole agents of development have exacerbated their poverty. Junette Davids discusses women's response to poverty through community development in South Africa and illustrates the need for a holistic approach to poverty and women issues. The final article in the international section is an excerpt of the speech delivered by Asgedet Stefanos to the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW). The organization was formed during the Eritrean war of liberation in which women played a key role. With the war over, Stefanos argues that women must effectively redefine their roles and assert their status in the independent state.

I am particularly pleased and honored that two women who have dedicated their lives to the economic empowerment of women share their thoughts in this issue. The essay by Dr. Joan Wallace-Benjamin, and the interview conducted by Nina La Negra are extremely insightful regarding the challenges faced by Black women, and probably other women, as they seek to insist on economic parity in our society.

I would like to take this opportunity to also mention that I am resigning as Professor and Senior Fellow at the Trotter Institute. I will begin a new position at Tufts University in Massachusetts as a Professor in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning. I am pleased to report, however, that I shall continue my role as editor of the *Trotter Review*. During this transition, let me take this opportunity, therefore, to again thank the team

that has helped to make the *Trotter Review* a premier journal of social commentary. I begin with Anne Gathuo who has been in charge of our publications department for the last several years. While working on her dissertation, she has continued to make contributions that have strengthened the Trotter Institute, and advanced the exposure of the *Trotter Review*. I also want to thank scholars like Professors Stephanie Athey and Kimberly Moffitt who have provided much support over the years in reviewing and editing articles, and working with individual authors to ensure that their ideas are presented in the most effective ways. And, of course, the *Trotter*

Review would not be possible without the support of the staff at the Trotter Institute, particularly, our Associate Director Dr. Harold Horton, our fiscal officer, Ms. Muriel Ridley, and certainly Ms. Eva Hendricks who has been with the Trotter Institute since its founding. I want to thank all of these individuals, and say that I am proud to be part of their team.

Dr. James Jennings recently joined the faculty of Tufts University as Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning. He served the Trotter Institute as Senior Fellow and Director from 1988 to 2000.