



- Ending racial discrimination in America's advertising industry -

## Press Release

March 25, 2009

Contact: Deb Colbert, 301-565-5329 (O) or 301-332-0813 (C), [dacomm@aol.com](mailto:dacomm@aol.com);  
Richard J. McIntire, NAACP Communications Department, 202-463-2940 x1021,  
[rmcintire@naacpnet.org](mailto:rmcintire@naacpnet.org)

**NAACP CALLS ON TOP 25 ADVERTISERS TO HOLD  
ADVERTISING AGENCIES ACCOUNTABLE;  
ISSUES FIRST LETTER TO PROCTER & GAMBLE CEO TO  
ADDRESS DRAMATIC RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN U.S.  
ADVERTISING INDUSTRY  
*FIRST STEP IN BRINGING RACIAL EQUALITY TO MADISON AVENUE***

WASHINGTON, DC --- On the heels of the public launch of the Madison Avenue Project, and a recent study that exposed pervasive racial bias in America's advertising industry, the NAACP has sent a letter to Procter & Gamble Co. Chairman of the Board/CEO A.G. Lafley asking the big budget advertiser to require their advertising agencies to use diverse teams in creative and account management positions. In addition to Procter & Gamble, which spent \$5.2 billion on advertising in 2007, the NAACP has also issued letters to AT&T, Verizon Communications, General Motors Corp., Time Warner, Ford Motor Company, GlaxoSmith Kline, Johnson & Johnson, Walt Disney Co., Unilever, Sprint Nextel Corp., General Electric Co., Toyota Motor Corp., Chrysler, Sony Corp., L'Oreal, Sears Holding Company, Kraft Foods, Bank of America, Nissan Motor Co., Macy's, Anheuser Busch InBev, Honda Motor Co., Viacom and Berkshire, as the 25 highest budget advertisers in 2007. Together, these 25 firms spent \$52.6 billion on advertising in 2007.

The letter, from NAACP Interim General Counsel Angela Ciccolo, requests that Procter & Gamble, and each company, identify a senior executive to serve as a point of contact on the issue of racial bias in the advertising industry and to meet promptly with the NAACP. It states, "The initial emphasis in the Madison Avenue Project is the Big Four holding companies that dominate the industry -- Omnicom, WPP, Interpublic and Publicis...[We] seek your support as the NAACP works to fight discrimination in the advertising industry."

Drawing upon the Madison Avenue Project study, "Research Perspectives on Race and Employment in the Advertising Industry," which found dramatic levels of racial

discrimination throughout the industry against African-American professionals within pay, hiring, promotions, assignments, and other areas, the NAACP letter states:

“African-Americans have worked in advertising since the modern American advertising industry emerged more than 100 years ago. Yet, as employment discrimination has sharply diminished across the American labor market over recent decades, systemic barriers to equal opportunity in this \$31 billion a year industry have remained largely intact. Racial discrimination is 38 percent worse in the advertising industry than in the overall U.S. labor market, and that ‘discrimination divide’ between advertising and other U.S. industries is more than twice as large today as it was 30 years ago.”

The letter further cites specific findings including:

- Black college graduates working in advertising earn \$.80 for every dollar earned by their equally qualified White counterparts; based on national demographic data, 9.6 percent of advertising managers and professionals would be expected to be African-Americans. The actual percentage in 2008 was 5.3 percent, representing a difference of 7,200 executive-level jobs;
- About 16 percent of large advertising firms employ no black managers or professionals;
- Black managers and professionals in the industry are only one-tenth as likely as their White counterparts to earn \$100,000 a year;
- Blacks are only 62 percent as likely as their White counterparts to work in the powerful "creative" and "client contact" functions in advertising agencies.

“The behavior documented in the [report] is likely illegal, and we are sure that [specific company] would not wish to be associated in any way with such behavior. ... The report, for example, shows that the advertising industry has racial employment problems more than one-third larger than the nation's overall labor market. Further, the report indicates that the advertising industry is steadily falling even further behind peer industries,” the letter states.

The Madison Avenue Project is led by the NAACP and attorney Cyrus Mehri, of Mehri & Skalet, PLLC, who has won several multi-million dollar discrimination settlements against such corporations as The Coca-Cola Company, Morgan Stanley and Texaco Inc.; with the cooperation of Sanford Moore, a former advertising executive, current New York City talk radio co-host, and longtime advocate for racial parity in advertising. The study, entitled “Research Perspectives on Race and Employment in the Advertising Industry,” was conducted by a leading research firm, Bendick and Egan Economic Consultants.

The full text of the letter and other information can be found at [www.madisonavenueproject.com](http://www.madisonavenueproject.com).