

In the early 70's network advertising finally got soul

6/21/2018, noon | Updated on 6/21/2018, noon



Also of interest



In the early 70's network advertising finally got soul

Burrell: Advertising Revolution "In the early 1970's, network advertising finally got soul."

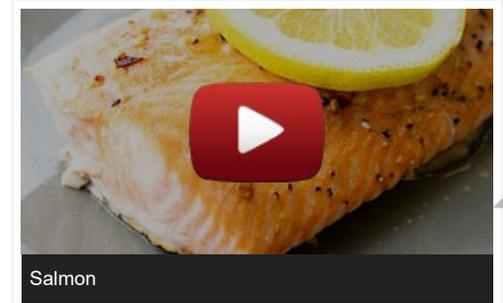
In 1960, Tom Burrell broke Chicago advertising's color barrier by becoming the first black person to land a job at one of the city's top advertising firms... in the mailroom. Soon became a copywriter helping solve some of the agencies creative problems. In 1966 there was a protest march in Mississippi. Out of that march came a voice that shouted, "Black Power!!!" The "Black Power" movement highlighted the fact that black people had a fundamentally unique perspective on the "American" experience.

By the 1970's, the movement had inspired Tom Burrell to make a bold move. He decided to open a black Advertising agency. During the past ten years, Tom gained invaluable experience and advertising expertise. He was ready to use his skills and training to step out on his own. He sought out the few black ad experts in Chicago, all of whom were working at white agencies. Once he convinced them of the possibilities of a black target-market agency, they joined Tom and set about the task of founding a black-owned advertising agency. They knew that white corporations had begun to understand the "Black Power of Profitability."

The Burrell Advertising Agency, under Tom's leadership, approached targeted marketing from the standpoint that their creative work had to reflect



VIDEO



Chatham

authentic black lifestyle and culture in a real and positive way. Tom Burrell coined a term to fit this approach, "Positive Realism." The message was "Black people are not dark-skinned white people."

The agency also understood that music had always played an important role in the black "American" experience. Tom Burrell enlisted a group of young, gifted, black producer/composers to make sure the music behind their advertising messaging was authentic to the culture. Many award-winning TV and radio commercials came out of the Burrell Agency. All of them had scores that had been written by the hottest black music producer/composers in Chicago. The tracks were infused with the sounds of the latest R & B/Soul chart-toppers of the day. Through the collaboration of Burrell and their music producers...the award-winning hits kept coming.

This is the story an advertising agency that forged the way for young, black hopefuls to make their mark in the ad business. Meet Burrell Advertising's original "Agency Architects" as they reunite for the first time in decades. Discover how they helped make Burrell Advertising the largest, most successful targeted marketing agency of its day; permanently shifting the landscape of advertising forever.

Hyde Park

South Suburban

Southend

Weekend

[View Mobile Site](#)

SECTIONS

[Home](#)
[Community Focus](#)
[Local News](#)
[Fashion](#)
[Bill's Business](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Lifestyles](#)
[National News](#)

MEDIA

[Photos](#)
[Videos](#)

ABOUT

[About Us](#)
[Advertise](#)

THE CHICAGO CITIZEN

8741 S Greenwood Ave
Suite 107
Chicago, IL 60619
(773) 783-1251

Advertising Request:
advertising@thechicagocitizen.com

Editorial Submissions:
editorial@thechicagocitizen.com

