

Economic Enfranchisement

THE CONTEH & BROWN GROUP



The Conteh & Brown Group is a company focused on business development in disenfranchised communities of the Diaspora and on the continent.

Our mission is to propel and support competent entrepreneurs into successful business operations.

Conteh & Brown's distinction in its mission is that we want to make sure these business ventures do three things: 1) result in employment for the community in which they operate, 2) represent a stable and insured income source for the owners' portfolio and 3) build a formidable economic alliance within the Diaspora that normalizes generational wealth & industrial cooperation.

We envision a robust, well-organized, strategic, and highly efficient cooperation of businesses, just like C|B Group, that assemble like Voltron when it's time to put *one of our own* into business, anywhere in the world. We must set the stage for Africa & The Diaspora's quantum industrial leap.

About Us

THE LEWISES: DESCENDANTS OF A CONTEH & A BROWN



Queens of the Bloodline: Marie Umar-Kamara (née Conteh) - above and Evette Lewis (née Brown) - to the right

What's in a Name?

Our company name is an ode to the first persons we ever knew: our mothers. Progressive women, loving mothers, committed wives, and exciting grandparents, it is our self-prescribed duty to retire these women by being successful in our family business. Our business values are as follows:

Authenticity: to be true to ourselves & our purpose

Honesty: to be leaders in true corporate transparency

Responsibility: to be judicious with our resources

Accountability: to be judicious with our decisions

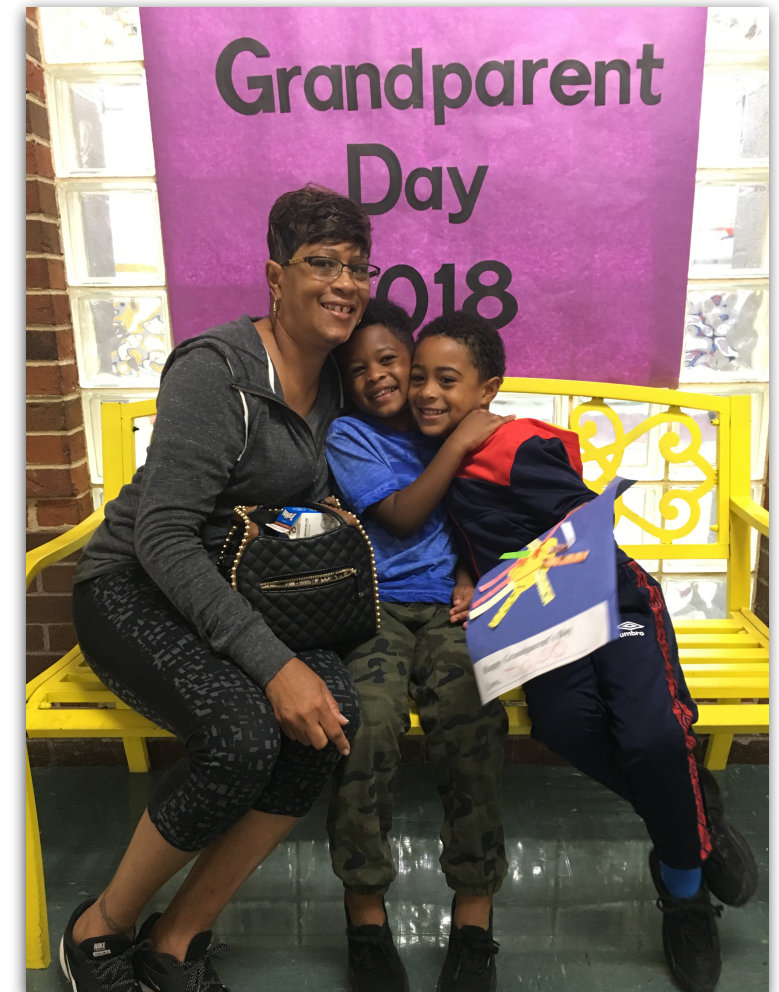
Joyfulness: to vibrate a frequency of love

Ownership: to promote generational wealth

Simplicity: to apply the simplest, cleanest solutions

Loyalty: to help & protect all our business mates

Continuous Learning: to remain teachable & reachable



Novel Coronavirus

CONTEH & BROWN GROUP

Why Commerce Can (and Should) Bring the Diaspora Together

COVID-19 caused a cascade of stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders around the world. Millions of people have been laid off. Some others have been furloughed with a deep sense of uncertainty. Some have been fortunate enough to be working from home and sustain their income.

A number of businesses have been able to pivot their services and maintain some income. Other businesses have closed for good.

We have seen the stock market respond in unprecedented ways. Most recently, during the week of April 20, oil prices fell below zero dollars per barrel (-\$37.⁶³). *Sub-zero oil prices* is a term that didn't exist in our economic lexicon before this week. The business world has changed forever.

COVID-19 has also severely taxed healthcare and auxiliary industries, especially the personal protective equipment (PPE) market. The stock market has fluttered with talk of potential COVID-19 treatments, vaccines, and companies producing PPEs at the instruction of the federal government.

There is another very interesting thing we have seen during this time. It is not a new thing, rather a novel manifestation of something we are all familiar with: racism and classicism.



Image courtesy World Bulletin
<https://www.worldbulletin.net/world/mapping-africas-natural-resources-h191272.html>

Year of the Quarantine

CONTEH & BROWN GROUP

The Big Shut Down...And Commerce Stood Still

By the end of March 2020, most governors had issued Executive Orders for their citizens to *shelter-in-place* and for *non-essential* businesses to close their doors temporarily.

In Virginia, Governor Northam issued a shelter-in-place order through June 10, as a tentative date.

Virginians were advised to *stay home* (unless traveling for essential items like groceries and supplies or to seek medical attention), *keep gatherings to 10 or less* people, and *employ social distancing measures* as well.

A couple of weeks later, it was recommended that we wear PPEs, specifically masks, while out in public.

Healthcare professionals were already discussing the shortage of PPEs in their facilities, some even resorting to reusing masks.

We started to hear conversations about enacting the Defense Production Act (DPA), which “gives the federal government the

power to direct private businesses to produce crucial items in a national emergency” ([PolitiFact](#)).

It sounds and seems like an easy enough solution: to use the manufacturing sites of great American companies who are already closed for regular business.

Dr. Willie Wilson is the founder of [Omar Medical Supplies](#) in Illinois. In business since 1997, they were passed over by local governments, who later purchased from China.

In France, luxury perfume lines Givenchy and Dior were forced to halt normal production. But the companies pivoted, and manufactured hand sanitizer to distribute to the people of France, *for free*.

However, there persists a disconnect between our current lack of PPEs and a tangible solution to close the gap. The DPA has not been enacted and discussion about it has disappeared.

[We Buy Black](#) featured a story out of Chicago about [Omar Medical Supplies](#). Founded by Dr. Willie Wilson in 1997, they have distribution facilities around the country and bring in millions of KN95 masks each week to distribute.

Illinois has reported over 25,000 infections as of mid-April. The Cook County Jail, located in Chicago, is referred to as ground zero for the infection in the state. Some 200 correctional officers have tested positive.

According to the We Buy Black article, Founder Dr. Wilson has contacted both the mayor and the governor but has received no answer or call back. Instead, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker spent \$1.7 million of tax payers' money on two flights of PPEs from China.

Imagine the level of containment of COVID-19 Illinois could have facilitated if not for the delay of waiting for PPEs from China, when a local provider was available. Considering that most *essential workers* (who typically occupy low-paying, hourly positions) are Black, there is a resounding frustration around the way racism and classicism rear their ugly heads, even in the midst of a healthcare crisis.

How are we to react to this form of ineptitude in leadership? It is frequently offered up that we speak with our votes. Do we vote in droves for a different candidate?

someone: i need to tell you something but
don't get mad

me , already mad:



\$1.7 million???

Do we withhold our vote altogether? Either way, what expectations do we communicate *before* we vote?

What are we going to do for ourselves now? At this very critical moment, how can we challenge the way we have been living and usher in a new and better standard for our children?

“It is no nation’s
destiny to be poor.”

- Luisa Diogo

Black People Need to Start Taking Care of Business

Black People Need to Start Producing. For themselves and not for other people. Black bodies produce an enormous amount of labor for the world market *and* flood that same market with their buying power.

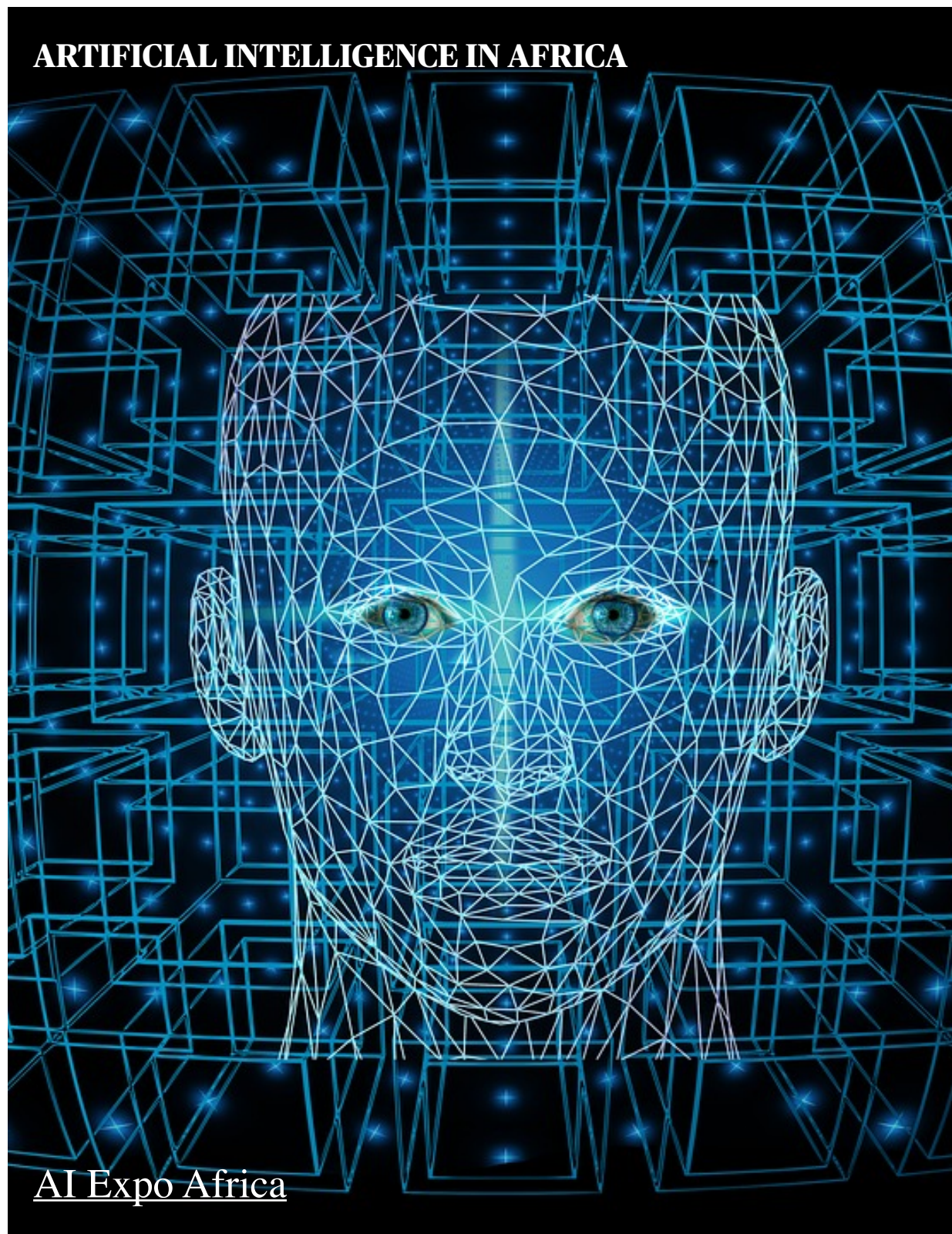
That energy will be harnessed and organized into businesses, converted into capital, and transitioned to generational wealth, for our children. Period.

The emergent need right now are accurate COVID-19 tests, personal protective equipment, and treatment & pharmaceutical research. This virus has joined the legion of pathogens we must co-exist with, but the science & technology available to us is more than capable of solving this problem *and* improving our daily lives.



Diamond mines in Sierra Leone
Image courtesy Rappaport Certified Diamond Auctions

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN AFRICA



AI Expo Africa

AFROFUTURISM



Article: When Art Meets Politics

CLEAN ENERGY FOR THE KITCHEN



World Bank Blog

The Call to Action

As states reopen, we still face a shortage of testing for COVID-19, there is no medical cure at this time, and a vaccination is at least 1-2 years away (we will open the discussion about vaccines in the Diaspora later).

As business owners & employers, as parents, and as a married team, we are concerned about the lackadaisical way we observe this pandemic being handled.

There is a possibility that this virus may “disappear like a miracle” or simply won’t cause the human carnage that has been statistically projected. But that is just a possibility. It’s a gamble we would have to take. Who is willing to gamble with their life? Their parents’ lives? Their children? I’m not.



Image courtesy Article: [The Problem of Industrialization in Sierra Leone](#)

If you are reading this, you are an entrepreneur or intellectual that we think could help us in create *think tank hubs* to first address COVID-19 and it’s impact on Black communities. These intellectual hubs would then take the ideas & plans produced in meetings and roll them into a project. The hubs would

eventually emerge as sophisticated project management teams in their localities.

Our initial goal is straightforward: innovate a reliable & cost-effective COVID-19 test to distribute throughout the Diaspora.

#AssembleLikeVoltron

CONTEH & BROWN GROUP

**BLACK
BUSINESSES
MATTER**

SUPPORT BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES

Article: The Westchester

The New Automated World Order: Culling of the “Non-Essential” Worker

After we solve the worst of the healthcare crisis we are facing, we will have to clean up the economic crisis that the pandemic and the subsequent stay-at-home orders caused.

The term “non-essential” business has bothered me from the onset because the fact of the matter is, every business is essential, as it provides essential income for someone and his/her family out there.

It’s clear that the focus is rescuing the economy, to the exclusion of the health & safety of the people whose work sustains the economy. It is also clear that nothing is clear. Little is agreed upon on the federal level and in the media. The states, really the citizens, are left to their own devices.

Thus, we have to have our own plan. We must develop and apply the simplest and cleanest solutions to this pandemic. We are obligated to our children to implement and execute these solutions for long term social and economic healing.



Please visit our website to join our problem-solving forums or to explore our services.

Our virtual meetings for the forum teams will begin Monday, June 1, 2020.

www.conteh-brown.com

info@conteh-brown.com

(434) 510-7883

(434) 373-5072

