

WILLIAM F. PICKARD, PH.D

Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

William F. Pickard, Ph.D. is Founder and Executive Chairman of GAA Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management (GAA), GAA New Ventures, Co-Managing Partner at MGM Grand Detroit Casino, and co-owner of four Black-owned newspapers. All newspapers have evolved into Real Times Media, a media marketing company.

Pickard's 50-year entrepreneurial career began as a McDonald's franchise in Detroit, Michigan. Since its founding in 1989, GAA has generated more than \$5 billion dollars in sales with eight plants in the U.S. and Canada, servicing corporations such as Boeing, Mercedes Benz, Ford, General Motors, Delphi, Johnson Controls, Starbucks, The Home Depot and Merck & Co. Pharmaceuticals. Black Enterprise honored Dr. Pickard as one of the 50 most Influential Black Entrepreneurs over the past 50 years.

He has served on numerous business and non-profit boards including Asset Acceptance Capital Corporation, Michigan National Bank, LaSalle Bank, Business Leaders for Michigan, National Urban League, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Black Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Directors of the National Park Foundation and is a lifetime member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity.

He is a philanthropist, supporting education at colleges and universities, including Western Michigan University, The Ohio State University, Florida A & M University, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Fort Valley State University and other HBCUs.

Dr. Pickard holds an Associate's Degree from Mott Community College, Bachelor's Degree from Western Michigan University, Master's Degree from the University of Michigan, a Ph.D. in Education from The Ohio State University and Honorary Doctorate Degrees from Clark Atlanta University and Florida A & M University.

Among his honors are the Morehouse College 34th Candle in the Dark Award for Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy, The Michigan Lifetime Humanitarian Award. In 2001, Pickard was awarded Michiganiaan of the Year for his business success, civic leadership and philanthropy.

Dr. Pickard is also creating a new generation of entrepreneurs with Surviving the Shift – 7 Proven Millionaire Moves for Embracing Change and Building Wealth. The 7 Principles of Entrepreneurship are: Vision/Attitude, Opportunity, Relationships, Talent/Skillset, Financial, Failure and Faith. Dr. Pickard will share his undeniable principles anyone can use to become a successful entrepreneur.

In his philanthropic efforts he continues to contribute to education, arts, culture, and entrepreneurship. The William F. Pickard Living Center is named in his honor at Grand Valley State University. He has donated over \$3M to Western Michigan University which was used to build a new facility on campus, Hall-Archer-Pickard East and Hall-Archer-Pickard West.

In conjunction with Judson W. Pickard, both of LaGrange, Georgia, he committed \$2M to Morehouse College to launch a new scholarship to expand Morehouse scholarship opportunities; Over \$1M to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; \$1M to Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History; \$1M to Motown Historical Museum; \$500K to Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) in honor of Arthur L. Johnson and Judge Damon J. Keith and \$100K to Wayne County Community College District in honor of Deborah Green Virgiles and Maurene Brown Smith. In March, 2021, he partnered with his friend of 50 years, His Excellency Governor General Cornelius A. Smith and launched the Smith-Pickard Friendship and Alliance Scholarship at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) in Tallahassee by committing \$300,000 to fund scholarships for students from the United States and the Bahamas, studying Agriculture.