

Dr. Logan H. Westbrooks

Official Biography

Logan H. Westbrooks was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. After graduating from Booker T. Washington High School, he attended LeMoyne Owen College on a two-year Elks scholarship. He then transferred to Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri where he earned his B. A. Degree in Business Administration. He was a member of the Lincoln Student Government Association, where he developed his business savvy as a student representative for the Phillip Morris Corporation. He spent two years in the military and later settled in Chicago, Illinois in 1963, where he was hired as a merchandising salesman for Johnson Publishing Company. In 1965 he was hired as a management trainee at RCA/Victor Distributing Corporation in Des Plaines, Illinois. Doors of opportunity opened up for him to work in the record division of the company promoting their famous recording artists Sam Cooke and Elvis Presley, while learning the business of selling recorded music.

In 1967 he made history when he was hired by Capitol Records Distribution Corporation as their first African American territory salesman. Westbrooks was responsible for promoting and selling singles and albums by Black artists and Country and Pop artists. They included Lou Rawls, Nancy Wilson, Nat King Cole, The Beatles, Bobby Gentry, Glen Campbell, The Lettermen, Frank Sinatra and Cannonball Adderly. This is also where he was introduced to rack jobbers, one stops and mom & pop stores.

Westbrooks found his niche in promoting Black music to the mainstream. He had a special gift and skill for making unknown artists household names and even broadening their fan base all over the world with great success. He also built bridges, broke barriers, and created opportunities for other African Americans to become music marketing professionals and entrepreneurs.

In 1968, he was promoted to Regional Promotion Manager for the Midwest. After two years, Westbrooks was promoted to the position of Administrative Assistant to the Vice President of Marketing and was transferred to the home office of Capitol Records in Hollywood, California.

With each new plateau, Westbrooks leveraged opportunities to merge business with the community. In 1971, he enlisted Capitol Records to contribute financially to the Mafundi Institute; an organization based in Watts, California, that exposed youth to acting and the arts. Westbrooks also implemented a plan with the National Medical Association that more than doubled enrollment for African American students in Medical School by the year 1975.

He left Capitol Records and was subsequently named The National R&B Promotions Director for Mercury Records in Chicago, where he handled releases for artists such as Jerry Butler, Gene Chandler, Melba Moore, Earl Garner, Buddy Miles and Rod Stewart. He also nurtured his relationship with Minette's One Stop, The

Leaners, George Daniels' Record Store, Gardner's One Stop, and Rose Book Store and Handleman from his territory salesman days.

In November 1971, Westbrook was hired by music icon Clive Davis to become the first Director of Special Markets for CBS Records—a newly created division to penetrate the Black consumer market. He spearheaded efforts to market R&B hits like “Back Stabbers” by the O'Jays and “Me and Mrs. Jones” by Billy Paul. He also worked with artists like Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Johnny Mathis, Johnny Nash, the Isley Brothers, Patti Labelle, Taj Mahal, Earth Wind & Fire, Sly Stone, Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ), Santana, and many others. He was also the co-architect of The Harvard Report, which became a template for the Black marketing division. This also spawned another book titled Power 101-The Harvard Report: Soul Music and The American Dream.

In 1976 Logan left CBS Records to join Don Cornelius for the formation of Soul Train Records as Vice President of Marketing, in a partnership with Cornelius and Griffey Entertainment. In addition to numerous business ventures, Westbrook served as a professor at California State University, where he taught two classes: *The Anatomy of a Record Company* and *The Quincy Jones Workshop*, which included Stage Production and Television. More than 400 students were able to take advantage of this hands-on course of study. Westbrook also made sure that the class was opened to young people in the neighborhood who were not enrolled at the university.

Additionally, Westbrook authored the book *The Anatomy of a Record Company*, which he used as a text book. Westbrook has contributed to three other publications: *Freedom*, *COGIC: What It Means To Me*, and *Family Affair: Deconstructing the African American Identity*. Dr. Westbrook's lecture series emphasizing the impact and benefits of HBCU's is often in demand.

In 1972 Logan brought the entire CBS roster of Black Artists to Chicago to perform at the Push Expo, and his entire staff was there as volunteers. Also in 1972, he initiated a project to produce a concert for the neighborhood at Mt. Morris Park in Harlem for the neighborhood youngsters with Jazz artist as headliners.

In 1973 Westbrook persuaded the Nixon White House to become involved with Black Music as a result of his close association with President Nixon's top African American aide Stan Scott. Consequently, as a White House representative, Mr. Scott started attending NATRA (National Association of Television and Radio Announcers) conventions and all Black music business sessions. Westbrook persuaded CBS' record division and CBS corporate to underwrite and provide musical acts for Mrs. Coretta Scott King's annual fundraiser at the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta, which was attended by then governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter and Andrew Young. Through the efforts of Westbrook, CBS also produced a major gala and fundraiser for the Black Caucus in Washington, D.C., with his friend Don Cornelius as emcee, and Nancy Wilson and Isaac Hayes as headliners. As a result of that association, a top African American executive from CBS Records was appointed as a lead fundraiser for the Black Caucus.

In 1974 Westbrooks was appointed by Walter Yetnikoff to spearhead CBS's marketing strategies to explore and capture potential African markets. Westbrooks was then named Director of Special Markets for Columbia Records International, as well as managing executive of CBS Records in Africa and Paris, France. He worked there recruiting potential African artists such as Fela Kuti, and to investigate opportunities for Black artists and the recording and manufacturing of records in Nigeria. He also collaborated with Johnny Seka in planning and implementing the first Jackson 5 African tour in 1974 in Senegal. In doing so, he became the link between the U.S. and Africa, resulting in special associations with Dr. Léopold Sédar Senghor, President of Senegal and his successor Abdou Diouf. This association led to an appointment as Ambassador for Africa for the Annual African Music Festival for Education in Senegal in 1997.

Residual benefits from his career extended to other aspects of the music business. Westbrooks opened the door for African American promoters who had been blocked access to major artists. Through Westbrooks, Dick Griffey, Al Haymon, and, significantly, Quintin Perry launched successful careers by producing major concerts with Westbrooks' artists. Westbrooks recognized the importance of Black radio and Black media for editorial content in the entertainment section, and he made a commitment for major advertising dollars for Jet, Essence, and Soul magazines in an effort to reach the African American consumer. He also utilized local disk jockeys for radio voiceovers in their markets.

Westbrooks' next endeavor was founding Source Records, which was distributed by MCA Incorporated. Source Records became the home of Chuck Brown & the Soul Searchers, Sharon Paige, Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, and the group Smash (which was comprised of the DeBarge family). The label created a string of hits that were certified Gold, including the chart topping "Bustin' Loose," recorded by the late great Godfather of Go-Go Music, Chuck Brown. "Bustin' Loose" also provided the catchy rhythm track for Nelly, who customized his version in 2002 under the title "Hot in Herre" which shot to #1 on Billboard's Top 100 and was certified Double Platinum. Westbrooks was also instrumental in helping African American artists to achieve sales unheard of in the music industry.

Westbrooks has always been committed to community involvement. During a stellar career that has spanned more than 50 years, he has leveraged his business and marketing prowess at his real estate investment firm Westbrooks Management. He and his wife Geri purchased numerous properties in Los Angeles, including the former home of Heavyweight Champion Jack Dempsey. They converted it into The Helping Hands Home for Boys, which they operated for over 15 years. The Westbrooks are also former proprietors of the Crenshaw Square shopping mall, where they made famous the Sunny Sunday Arts show, a hub for local artists to convene and sell their wares.

Westbrooks was ordained in 1996 by the Church of God In Christ and received his Masters in Biblical Counseling from Eternal Word Graduate School. His dedication to the Church of God In Christ's mission to broaden and strengthen the territory of their churches in Monrovia and Azusa, California, resulted in increased numbers coming to

Christ and additional services to those in need. Currently he serves as Executive Secretary of the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Southern California and Administrative Assistant to the Jurisdictional Bishop.

Westbrooks has been interviewed or chronicled by local and national press, as well as PBS and the BBC. Highlights of his career have been enshrined in the Logan H. Westbrooks Collection at Indiana University's Archives of African American Music and Culture, which is also available online at <http://www.indiana.edu/~aamc/>. In 2014 the ultimate honor was bestowed when LeMoyne Owen College in Memphis, Tennessee, conferred upon Logan Westbrooks an **Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters**.

Among his many affiliations, Westbrooks is a lifetime member of the NAACP and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Dr. Westbrooks was also a 2008 Lincoln University Distinguished Alumni and an inductee in the 2009 HBCU Alumni Hall of Fame. As a producer he has developed three video shorts: *It's Never Too Late*, *The Healing House*, and *Home of the Heroes*.

Adding to a long list of commendations, Westbrooks has been named to receive the **2015 Faith Award from Faith Love & Hope Unlimited, The Music Pioneer Award from United Music Heritage, Inc., and The Vanguard Award from the Living Legends Foundation**. Currently Westbrooks is celebrating the release of his new book titled *The Anatomy of the Music Industry: How the Game Was & How the Game Has Changed*. It features commentary from Dr. Westbrooks and insights from over 35 music executives and artists. It is published by Ascent Books and is available on Amazon and at LoganWestbrooks.com.

Countless people have benefitted from his career because of his concern for community and society at large. With each phase of his life, he felt a responsibility and a sense of duty to share the knowledge and insight he learned as a result of his position. Rather than separating himself, he always sought to pull others into the fold by developing ideas and creating civic and business opportunities to move people forward.

Dr. Logan H. Westbrooks will forever be a global legend and trailblazer who helped shape Black music in every form. He redefined marketing Black music and African American artists and became the first African American music executive to have such a distinguished career at major record labels. His pioneering work of paving the way for African American executives and artists in the music industry has left a legacy of artists and music yet to be heard.

Dr. Westbrooks and his lovely wife Geri enjoy dual residences in Sherman Oaks, California, and Memphis, Tennessee. He is the proud father of Babette Moxey, her husband Jeremy, and grandfather to Brienne, Jordon, Elliot and Emelia Hart.

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