



ABRAHAM S. VENABLE

Abraham Venable is the former Executive Director of Urban Affairs at General Motors, where he dedicated himself to improving the position of minorities in all facets of the company operations. He also encouraged the corporation to more effectively address social and economic issues affecting minorities. Born in Washington, D.C., Mr. Venable is a graduate of Howard University earning the bachelors and masters degrees in economics. He served in a number of assignments at the United States Department of Commerce before becoming the first minority director of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (now the Minority Business Development Agency). While there he oversaw the beginning of a concerted effort to bring minorities into the mainstream of American business. In 1968, he was nominated to participate in the Fellow Program at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. One of several awards

from Howard University included the Minority Business Advocacy Award from the Small Business Development Center. Recently, the Department of Commerce presented Mr. Venable with its first Lifetime Achievement Award. Mr. Venable holds honorary degrees from Shaw College of Detroit and Grand Valley State College in Michigan; he is also an honorary member of Beta Gamma Sigma, a business fraternity at Howard University. His international business expertise was particularly apparent in several African nations. Mr. Venable is the author of several articles dealing with black businessmen as well as a book, *Building Black Business—An Analysis and a Plan*. All rights and proceeds from the sale of the book were assigned to Howard University to establish a scholarship fund in his name. As a result, two \$100,000 endowments have been established: one for the School of Business and one for the Howard University Jazz Ensemble. Currently, Mr. Venable serves as chairman of the Institute for American Business, a non-profit organization that he founded, which is concerned with developing non-traditional business opportunities for minorities. Mr. Venable is married to Dr. Anna G. Venable and they have three children—Karen, Douglas and Stephen. To a great extent, his strong interest in jazz can be attributed to the music environment he found growing up in Washington. During his early years, he was quite active as a saxophonist with some of the outstanding local groups; most notably the “Swingmasters” and the Howard Theater house band. The “Swingmasters” was a big band that included professional musicians in addition to some amazingly talented young players. Among his peers were Charlie Rouse, Benny Golson, Frank Wess, and numerous others who were to become distinguished jazz artists.