



**CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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The California African American Chamber of Commerce (CAACC)
unanimously to add **Derek Smith** to its Board of Directors,
Chairman **Timothy Alan Simon, Esq.**, announced.

(Sacramento) July 11, 2023, Smith is the founder and managing member of **Marinship Development Interest**, a California African American Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) leading heavy building and construction innovation for civil and energy infrastructure projects. MBE certification benefits minority-owned entities in California by enabling access to many business opportunities and connections, such as prospective buyers, government agencies, and procurement professionals.



“Derek’s experience, proven leadership skills, resourcefulness, professional achievements, finding resolutions to problems and ability to approach strategic solutions will prove useful to CAACC’s leadership team and objectives,” Simon said. “He will be a major part of our organization’s day-to-day operations, planning process, programs, policies, and implementation strategies.”

Smith joins CAACC with expertise in accessing programs that provide professional connections and resources that help create strong bonds that strengthen small businesses.

MBEs are most commonly defined as a company that is at least 51% owned and operated by an individual who is a United States citizen and is at least 25% African American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Latino or Hispanic, or Native American descent, according to Fundbox.

Fundbox – connected to over 500,000 businesses – is an embedded working capital platform for small businesses. It is a leading provider of working capital that uses technology to help small businesses optimize cash flow.

Smith said he is motivated to help the largest African American, statewide-business organization grow, expand exponentially, and raise its professional capacity and image in the interests of CAACC’s members. He said he will operate as CAACC’s “spokesperson.”



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“I am looking forward to elevating the profile of the California African American Chamber of Commerce not only in the state of California but throughout the country. Once we grow the profile, CAACC’s membership will grow and mature accordingly. I look forward to getting the chamber out there in front of some important causes and issues. With that, it will bring exposure and ensure that people will feel confident about joining our organization,” Smith said.

A native San Franciscan, Smith has witnessed the city’s transformation first-hand. From shipyards, warehouses, and manufacturing plants to light rails and skyscrapers; San Francisco has rapidly grown into a global epicenter of business and technology. A third-generation skilled tradesman, he has benefited from an insider’s view of challenges involved in executing large infrastructure projects throughout his entire life. His grandparents – sheet metal worker **Willie Henry Smith, Sr.**, and welder **Bessie Inez Smith** – lent their talents to the Marin Shipbuilding Division of W.A. Bechtel Company during WWII, in Sausalito from 1942-1945. At a time when defense industries were recruiting women to contribute to the war effort, Bessie Inez Smith was one of the first African American women to enter the workforce and earn wages independently.

After obtaining his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1989, Smith earned a master’s in civil engineering from Stanford University in 1990. He began his career in the construction industry while an undergraduate, serving as a field engineer for a large building contractor in San Francisco, working on building renovation projects. Prior to the inception of Marinship, Smith had built a reputation for successfully estimating costs for large building investments and managing resources for the execution of building renovation, seismic retrofit and tenant improvement as a Plant Construction Company estimator and project manager.

Most recently, he addressed small, minority, and women-owned businesses and advocated for systemic improvements to prioritize the economic development of traditionally underserved communities at the Caltrans 2nd Annual DBE Summit. The heavy building and construction leader serves on numerous community boards and in appointed positions, including investor board member of a California hydrogen production company start-up, the San Francisco First Tee (former), the Marin City Community Development Corporation Advisory Board, and California Energy Commission’s Lithium Recovery Task Force (former). Smith is also a founding member of the Black Developers Forum, a member of the American Association of Blacks in Energy and Black Engineering and Science Alumni Club (BESAC) at UC Berkeley and an Alameda County Honorary Deputy Sheriff.

About California African American Chamber of Commerce

California’s largest statewide African American Chamber organization, CAACC’s mission is to drive economic opportunity and wealth creation for African American businesses and connect and harness the collective strength of our statewide network of member organizations to elevate our fiscal health. Smith said he is motivated to help the business organization grow and expand.

For more information, email info@calaacc.org or call (800) 791-7068.