

*National Association of  
Black Geologists and Geophysicists*

*“Geosciences - Bridging the Gap”*



*Friday, October 14, 2005*

*7:00pm*

*(6:30pm Cash Bar)*



*Awards Banquet*

## The Birth of the NABGG

In 1979, there were rumblings from a number of minority professionals that they felt the need to connect, communicate, and network with other minority professionals in the geosciences. The voices of our colleagues became louder as time passed and on one given afternoon there was extensive conversation regarding the possibility of setting up an organization that would reach out and let others know that there was an opportunity for individuals with an aptitude in math and science to become Geoscientist. The people involved in the discussions were Curtis Lucas, Allan Harris, James Briggs, James Davis and Michael Carroll. Mr. Lucas was a dominant force at that point with a multiplicity of ideas about what he felt the direction of such an organization should be. In 1980, we met and compiled a list of geoscientist that we knew in the Houston area. This list was compiled with the intent of setting up an initial meeting to table our ideas and to at least make contact with other minority geoscience professionals. There was communication with Mr. Briggs in Dallas and Mr. Davis in Denver and they were charged with establishing similar sessions in their respective cities.

In Houston, we needed a central location to meet, a willing host, and we also needed to have a figure that everyone knew and respected to get this thing off the ground. We found all of these items at the home of Dr. Mack Gipson, who had been a college professor at Virginia State University. We contacted Dr. Gipson and asked if he would host an Ice Breaker/Planning Session at his home. When we told him what the intent was, he indicated that there had been a lot of conversations about doing this kind of thing in the past. At that point, we indicated to him that we were involved with a group of individuals who were planning to do more than talk about it. He agreed to host the session. Mr. Lucas and I split a list of twenty-nine names and began calling and making an appeal to individuals to attend this meeting. We got warm responses from the majority of people that we talked with and the promise from several to spread the word.

The meeting was a success. There was a room full of professionals buzzing with ideas, energy and enthusiasm. Dr. Gipson was a central figure along with Mr. Lucas that evening. It became tremendously obvious that this was at the least, a meeting that everyone there had been looking forward to for some time. Setting up an introductory session and getting people to attend was one thing; setting up an organization and getting everyone moving toward the same objectives would be quite another story. The meetings that followed were held at the homes of some of the charter members. The majority of the meetings were held at the home of Mr. Ken Yarbrough. Mr. Yarbrough was gracious enough to allow us to meet at his home which quickly became a forum for debate and conjecture on how the organization should be set up, what the objectives should be, who should compose the membership, should we incorporate, etc. At times, it seemed as though the discussions were endless.

Other prominent figures arose in these sessions. A fiery, young woman from Sierra Leone, named Rachel Taylor, who was at the time with SOHIO, shared her passion and energy to chair a committee to establish the constitution and bylaws of the organization. Laverne Gentry, John Chance, and Millicent McCaskill assisted in establishing a foundation and base on which the organization could stand. Walter Alexander, an established independent at the time, became a strong advocate of the organization. John Leftwich and Reginal Spiller became champions of the ideas to involve and inspire youth to consider careers in the geosciences. At a very early point in our series of meetings, we decided on an organization name and on a set of objectives that were reviewed, amended and voted on by the charter members. The name that was agreed upon was ***The National Association of Black Geologists and Geophysicists***. The objectives that we established were accepted and remain a focus of our organization today. Its program of scholarship support, local interaction with schools and professional meetings work well to support the enhanced participation of ethnic minorities in geosciences. Through the years, NABGG has awarded over \$300,000 to over 200 students for undergraduate and graduate study.

Since 1990, NABGG has become significantly more recognized as a national, professional organization by becoming a member society to the American Geological Institute, the Geological Society of America, and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. NABGG also has member representation on the National Petroleum Council.

NABGG was established and incorporated in 1981 in Houston, Texas and has been an active organization nationwide with members in the oil and gas industry, academia, government, and most importantly in colleges and universities.

*2005 Annual Awards Banquet*  
*“Geosciences – Bridging the Gap”*

*∞ Program ∞*

Welcome/Opening Remarks Roxanne Lamb—USGS, Richmond, VA  
2005 Conference Chairperson

Invocation Michael Mitchell—ExxonMobil, Houston, TX  
NABGG Assistant Treasurer

*Dinner Served*

History of NAGBB Reginal Spiller—Frontera Resources  
Senior Vice President

Introduction of Speaker Zelma Maine-Jackson—State of Washington State  
NABGG Advisory Board

Speaker Presentation Peter Taiwo  
Executive Director, Baobab Tree Project, Inc.

Acknowledgements/Recognition Patricia Hall—BP America, Houston, TX  
NABGG Past President

Closing Remarks Robert Johnson—Paradigm GeoTechnology  
NABGG President

## *2005 Conference Sponsors*

*With your support through sponsorship we are able to provide scholarships, community service, and the planning of our annual conferences. We are grateful to have you as our partner this year as we expand our network by "Bridging the Gap" for our members and geoscientists in industry and academia. Thank you for your support of our annual conference.*

*Roxanne Lamb*

*University of Wisconsin-Madison – Department of Geology & Geophysics*

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