



April 2021

Welcome to the first edition of the Wharton Black MBA Alumni Association's monthly newsletter!

In this edition:

1. *Upcoming Events*
2. *Alumni Ventures - Hannah Diop – WG '09 & D.C. Moore – WG '05*
3. *Alumni Around the World - Selorm Adadevoh – WG'07& Bryan Turpin – WG'06*
4. *ICYMI: Beyond COVID-19 Live Chat Recap*
5. *Reciprocity Ring: Post a job opening or highlight a personal/professional venture*

Upcoming Events

- **Tuesday May 4, 2021 – The Current and Future of Fintech featuring Dean Erika James**

Join Erika James, Dean of the Wharton School, and Ross Stevens, W'91, PAR'23, Founder & CEO, Stone Ridge Asset Management LLC and Founder & Executive Chairman, NYDIG for a conversation about the rapidly evolving role of Fintech at the Wharton School, followed by a conversation with Professor David Musto and Jackie Reses, W'92, CEO, Posthouse Capital about current and future trends in this pivotal sector. The session will close with Q&A from the audience.

[Click to register](#)

- **Sunday May 16, 2021 - Wharton Black MBA Alumni Reunion Weekend Wind Down**
- **2 pm - 3: 30 pm ET**

Connect with old and new friends, enjoy the musical vibes of DJ Youssouph (WG '19), visit break out rooms with your class and wind down from reunion weekend activities.

[Click to register](#)

Alumni Ventures



Hannah Diop – WG' 09

Overview of business venture

Owned by Hannah Diop and Issa Rae, Sienna Naturals is a foundational health regimen for textured hair that treats hair-care like skin care. The brands highly effective and luxurious Wash Day Rituals restore hair's health through lightweight, natural ingredients, proven by science. Unlike styling products that “control” textured hair, Sienna Naturals avoids synthetics, chemicals and heavy oils. Think clean skincare regimen for textured hair.

Why did you decide to pursue this venture?

I always say that Sienna Naturals has been inside of me since childhood, and was brought to fruition to fill a void I continuously saw in the textured hair care space. My mother was very careful about what we put in and on our bodies and this extended to our personal care and beauty routines. I have so many memories of shopping in the natural food stores with my mom and seeing that there wasn't a clean offering that actually worked for my hair type sitting on the shelf. With Sienna Naturals, I set out to prove that clean products can be formulated to actually work for kinky, coily and curly hair types and that they can improve the health of our hair and scalp over time by using plant based ingredients to repair damage, increase moisture, and strengthen textured hair. That's why I think of the company as a wellness brand. I want my customer to fall in love with their hair and find a new level of freedom of expression through the improved condition of their hair and scalp.

What has the journey been like?

The journey has of course been challenging at times, but extremely rewarding. I spent the first few years of the brand really focusing on perfecting the formulations with my chemist, which set us up with a great foundation. Now, I am getting serious about fundraising and bringing in team members to help support the growth of the company. Programs like Target Takeoff have personally aided me immensely on my

journey, as well as constantly being in communication with other entrepreneurs - having people who get start-up life has been critical to have in my network. Over the last year specifically, my focus has been on recruiting people who see the vision of the brand and who can contribute to it exponentially.

How can alumni support your venture?

Word of mouth is key and extremely helpful. Share our story, engage us on socials, buy it for your friends and family. We all know three people, show them Sienna Naturals and encourage them to share as well.

For more information: <https://www.siennanaturals.com/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sienna-naturals/>



D.C. Moore, WG '05

Overview of business venture

I am the Co-Founder and Managing Partner of a private equity firm that invests growth equity in African small- and mid-cap businesses. We prioritize industrials and light infrastructure firms across a number of different sectors - e.g., pharmaceuticals, renewables, waste management, agriculture, etc. The firm is the culmination of everything my partner and I (Ije Ikoku WG 2006) have done before and after Wharton, so we are extremely passionate about it. The strategy provides us the opportunity to generate significant commercial returns; while supporting African entrepreneurs/management (especially women), creating jobs, making infrastructure more resilient and addressing climate challenges.

Why did you decide to pursue this venture?

I feel like I've been building towards it my entire life. I was a military kid, so I had the chance to live abroad when I was young and really enjoyed it. As an engineer, I had the chance to work in the Dominican Republic prior to applying to Wharton. In my Wharton essays I wrote that I wanted to end up blending my engineering skillset with business and finance skills, in an emerging market. I did not know much about PE at the time but the goal continued to evolve throughout my career. I chose McKinsey out of business school because they had a presence in Africa. It gave me the opportunity to work there. By the time I was leaving McKinsey I knew that I wanted to apply my operational skillset to investments. When I accepted my previous role, as CIO of a Pan-African industrial and infra firm, I knew what I

wanted to do after I left. The only uncertainty was timing. I had the opportunity to spend 9 years executing, and refining, an investment strategy we feel will be a fundamentally different approach for the region.

What has the journey been like?

We launched our fund in January 2020, right before the pandemic. You hear and read how tough entrepreneurship is, especially when you are trying to get your business off the ground. I was prepared for that. I wasn't prepared for a once in a lifetime pandemic. Honestly, you learn a lot about how resilient you can be. You also learn a lot about the people in your network and your team. I've been lucky enough to have a ton of people who will take a call, provide a reference, give me feedback/advice, etc. We've also been lucky enough to have a team that is willing to put in the work during a period of extreme uncertainty and volatility. As it stands, we have been able to weather the storm, get closer to interested investors and significantly grow our pipeline of deals. We also have entrepreneurs who value our expertise and approach. That's allowed us to work closely with them during a period of uncertainty for them. We are happy with where we are and look forward to making more progress through the end of the year.

How can alumni support your venture?

If they are, or know of other investors, looking for high commercial and impact returns please feel free to reach out. We have been successful in connecting with investors looking to diversify and Africa is an underexplored region for investment. Especially in private equity. Also, not specific to us, continue to support others who reach out to you for advice or insight. That may not help our venture directly but it has meant a lot to us and we'll definitely continue to pay it forward. We're all better off when the network is strong.

For more information www.griotpartners.com

Alumni Around The World



Selorm Adadevoh, WG'07

Current residence: I currently reside in Ghana after stints in Boston (USA), London (UK) and the Caribbean (Jamaica and Haiti) since my graduation from Wharton in 2007.

What do you appreciate the most about your current country of residence?

I have to say, the question illuminated my face because I love Ghana so much, it is my home country and I grew up here. I love the food and the people, and I am not sure I can isolate exactly what I appreciate the most. Moving back to Ghana in 2018 was the beginning of a new chapter in my life. My sons love it here and they are spoiled with all the love they receive from aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends – essentially, that means the gifts and goodies they receive so often.

What is currently keeping you busy and fulfilled?

The last 12 months have had me consumed in counting how many times I mention “Covid-19” in a day and I am sure I have broken various records. What a change our lives have undergone and mine has been no different. I have been busy learning how to live in my own space and create excitement out of nothing. I have found that I spend more time working under the guise of the leisure of working from home and I recognize that I need a new strategy to life and work. The most fulfilling activity though has been enjoying being around my boys more, taking walks, bike rides, seeing them grow and amazed at their creativity which manifests in sometimes “annoying” tricks.

What have been some personal and professional highlights in your journey since graduation?

When I reflect on my journey since graduation, I look back filled with joy and gratitude. Some of the key highlights in my professional career have been working on some transformational projects when I was in consulting, discussing financing alternatives for a Biotech company at 2am in the morning with my colleagues, moving to the country of beautiful beaches (Jamaica and Haiti) and realizing my dream to become a CEO. On the personal side, the highlights have been mostly with family and the joy of celebrating the birth of my two boys, moving from one city to

another (in total I have lived in 6 cities since leaving Wharton in 2007) and lastly, moving back to Ghana and into our own home.



Bryan Turpin, WG' 06

Current residence: Bangalore, India

What do you appreciate the most about your current country of residence?

The low cost of living, especially compared to the last two places I've lived, NYC and Hong Kong. Minimizing expenses is key when your salary drops to zero because you're starting a business.

What is currently keeping you busy and fulfilled?

Together with Samita Malik (WG '06), we are preparing for the launch of MADE x HANDS. The aim is to be the M.A.C. of home decor, an inclusive luxury brand that inspires tastemakers and collectors by celebrating the cultural contributions of the African and Asian diasporas.

Personal/Professional highlights since graduation

- Marrying my better half and having three vivacious children.
- Living in China and immersing myself in such a fascinating part of the world.
- Building a business from scratch. This is terrifying at times, but mostly exhilarating.

Biggest life lessons since graduation

- The struggle is real, protect and nurture yourself with regular physical fitness, contemplation and self-care.
- Assemble, and contribute to, a highly supportive inner circle.
- The most rewarding experiences are the ones that make you the most uncomfortable.
- Overspend on child care, especially when your children are young. This frees up time and energy to invest in yourself and your relationships.

- Eat delicious food in its place of origin is life changing (i.e. croissants for breakfast in France, pho for lunch in Vietnam, and Yakiniiku for dinner in Japan)
-

In Case You Missed It (ICYMI)

On April 19, 2021, we hosted a thought-provoking, interactive and frank discussion about COVID-19, with a team of experts on the pandemic frontlines. The experts got real about issues impacting Black communities, and offered insights on how to interpret the data and messages in main stream media. ICYMI (In case you missed it), you may view the event by clicking on the link below.

[Beyond COVID-19
Webinar Recording](#)

Reciprocity Ring: Sharing and Paying It Forward

[Post a job](#)

[Highlight a
venture](#)

[Share your
story](#)

[Support the African-
American MBA
Student Support Fund](#)

With your help, Wharton can continue to increase the number of African-American students who attend the best business school in the world. So far, we have raised \$2.3M of our \$3M goal.