California Black Chamber Of Commerce Founder Remembered As A Champion For Small Businesses

Aubry L. Stone
A California Treasure
As Founder, President and CEO of the California Black Chambers of Commerce, Aubry was very committed to the advancement in growth of African American Business Enterprise in California throughout the nation and internationally.

“Unmovable” is one word that truly describes my good friend and colleague, Aubry Stone. Despite dealing with serious health issues, Aubry continued to champion, greet, and connect as many people as possible with business opportunities and a platform for their voices to be heard.

**Aubry will be truly, truly, truly missed.**

Earl “Skip” Cooper II
President / CEO
Black Business Association
The oldest ethnic business organization in the state of California.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: (323) 291-9334 or MAIL@BBALA.ORG

WWW.BBALA.ORG
When a man has done what he considers to be his duty to his people and his country, he can rest in peace. I believe I have made that effort and that is, therefore, why I will sleep for eternity.

- Nelson Mandela

www.usblackchambers.org
In Remembrance Of Our Dear Friend

Aubry L. Stone

He was a member of the NAACP, a strong partner and an advocate for civil and economic justice.

He will be missed.

California/Hawaii NAACP • Alice Huffman, President

1215 K Street, Suite 1609, Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 498-1890 • www.ca-naacp.org
A California Treasure Is Remembered

He fought tirelessly to secure economic opportunities for African Americans throughout the state and beyond and now, after a long battle with cancer, he’s at rest.

Aubry Stone, founder and CEO of the California Black Chamber of Commerce died Nov. 28. He was 74 years old.

Stone, affectionately referred to by many as “Stoney,” was a formidable champion for Black entrepreneurs and was considered to be a giant in the small business community. While he was a native of Brooklyn, New York, his name was synonymous with California and was a familiar face – and voice – at the State Capitol.

“He was a pioneer and fierce advocate for minority business enterprise and for the Black community. He championed equal opportunities in the private and public sectors, and always talked about the need for better access to capital,” shared Los Angeles City Councilmember and former Assemblymember Curren Price.

“Aubry Stone was a fierce unapologetic supporter of all things Black,” shared former California Assemblymember Cheryl Brown. “He was our champion.”

Stone and five others created the California Black Chamber of Commerce in 1995 with the mission of providing programs and services to strengthen Black ownership and business opportunities throughout the state. The California Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation also operates radio station KDEE 97.5 FM.

He was also the founder and president of A. Stone & Associates, a corporate diversity-training firm designed to improve communications for increased productivity and break down stereotypes.

He also took on national leadership roles, at a time serving on the Pfizer National Minority Business Board and as Chairman of the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. He recently travelled to Africa to explore and promote business opportunities for Black business owners.

Stone was also a founding member of the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc. In his honor, the USBC created the Aubry Stone Advocate of the Year award, through which individuals such as Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Senator Corey Booker, Governor John Kasich, Congressman G. K. Butterfield, received this recognition.

“Aubry was like a second father to me during my adult life,” said USBC President/CEO Ron Busby. “He was full of sound and experienced advice. He was worldly in his travel, spiritual in his beliefs, which gave him a calming perspective on life. He was a visionary man with a commitment to the improvement of the Black community through entrepreneurial growth and development.”

“Aubry, like Parren James Mitchell, Reginald Lewis, Ron Brown and so many others, will always be remembered but their impact will be felt long after they’re forgotten,” Busby added.

Stone served on the California Regional Community Utilities Diversity Council, the Citibank Regional Community Board, the California Small Business Advisory Board, the CalTrans Small Business Board, and the Greenlining Coalition. He served on the Boards of the NAACP, the Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor’s Economic Development Council, the District Attorney’s Community Relations Board, and the State Fair Minority Council.

Upon his passing, many are reflecting on the legacy Stone leaves behind.

“He will be remembered as an outstanding force for economic and social justice,” shared California Hawaii State NAACP President Alice Huffman.

“Under Aubry’s leadership the CBCC has become not only a pillar of the community, but an invaluable resource for so many. Aubry will be greatly missed and we hope his family can find some comfort in the legacy he has left us all,” said Elk Grove Assemblymember Jim Cooper.

Stone championed issues ranging from redlining practices to African American procurement of contracts and recently spoke out about the inequities of legalized marijuana as it relates to African Americans and African American business owners.

“In America, economics are critical. It is incumbent upon us to connect small business development to the larger cause of improving the economic outlook of Black communities.”

― Aubry Stone

by Genoa Barrow
Observer Senior Staff Writer

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Aubry Stone Will Always Be Remembered As A Strong And Unapologetic Champion For California’s Small And Minority-Owned Businesses. He Made The State’s Corporations Better Because Of His Advocacy. He Will Be Missed.

— Ken McNeely, President AT&T Western Region
In Loving Remembrance of Aubry L. Stone

In loving remembrance of our beloved brother Aubry Lee Stone for his leadership and outspoken advocacy for the empowerment of African Americans in business, economic equality and social justice. Rest in Peace.

Aubry Stone and Richard Roundtree at the Allen W. Warren Celebrity Golf Challenge in 2015

Aubry Stone and I on a recent business trade mission to Durban, South Africa

A group of fellows with our dear brother Stoney at a golf outing

Councilmember Allen Wayne Warren, District 2
City of Sacramento
Aubry Stone was a visionary who fought for equity and prosperity for African American and American businesses for more than 40 years. He was a true warrior and bastion of strength having known him. He was a friend and a rare man who commanded a strong vision, strength, dedication, and resolve, in rec-ognition to excellence. We will miss him.

— Cassandra Cummings, The Stocks & Sillitos Roberts Development, LLC

Aubry was a true visionary who advocated for access and economic development for Black enter-

— Cheryl Brown, Former California Assemblymember

Under Aubry’s leadership the California Black Chamber of Commerce became a driving force of the community, but an irreplaceable resource for so many will be greatly missed and we hope his memory will be carried forward by other leaders who will fill the void he left us all.

— Jim Cooper, California Assembl

Remembering the honorable Aubry Stone, a distin-

— Orson Aguilar, President, The Greenlining Institute

Aubry was a true visionary who advocated for access and economic development for Black enter-

— Derrell and Tina Roberts Development, LLC

Aubry was an old school broker who fought for us an

— Thaxter Arterberry, host of KDEE radio show, "The Traffic Jam"

Aubry was like a second father to me by my adult age. He was a moral advisor. He was ur-berly in travel, spiritual in his mission, and always ready to help his community. Aubry was a

— Pat Fong Kushida, President/CEO California Chamber of Commerce

Aubry was a visionary who fought for equity and pro-

— Dr. David Evariste Mukasa Bulonge

His fight was silent because it was done within the walls of institutions and organizations of our com-

— My activism, I just wanted it to be done. I was always a person who believed in the power of

— Cassandra Walker Pye, founder of Three

Aubry Stone not only encouraged it, but he commanded a lifelong commitment to the plight of African Americans. The Black Chamber of Commerce opened doors for Black more than Aubry. His work as President and CEO of the California Black Chamber of Commerce made the African American dream come more accessible to our state’s diverse communities.

— Senate Republican Leader Patricia Bates (R- Laguna Niguel)

When you look at history, American or Black his-

— Malaki Seku Amen, President & CEO of the

To me and so many others throughout the nation, Aubry Stone was a beloved, mentor figure and father image. I worked with him for 37 years. I am blessed to have known Aubry as a committed, confident, con-

— Evelyn Fratzer, National Coalition 100 Black Women, Sacramento Chapter 4 Emeritus

Aubry’s single-minded focus was the creation of our Green Tech program. At the end of the

— Jay King, host of KDEE radio show, “The Traffic Jam”

There are no words for the loss of yet another hero in the movement. In his strong backbone, he redefined our liftingship commitment to the plight of African Americans. Right in front of our beloved Watson, you fought the good fight for economic equity and social justice. He will miss us on and off the battlefield.

— Alice Hughon, California, Hawaii State NAACP

He was a visionary who advocated for access and economic development for Black enter-

— Foluso A. Akindele, Founder of the U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

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Aubry Stone was an expert on business matters and relationship-building. The following are his thoughts about a few subjects.

**ON HIS CAREER**

I think that the entrepreneurial spirit is a mindset. Some people get it automatically. Some get it from their parents. If it doesn’t exist in one, developing that spirit becomes a responsibility for people like myself. Where we can, we want to encourage those that can, to start and sustain their own businesses.

Studies show small business people are the best paid people in America. I came to a realization that many of our issues, including our most pressing social issues, can be resolved by capitalization. The Black community has never a lack of enthusiasm for developing businesses. There has never been a lack of self-confidence to do it. What is important, as entrepreneurs, is to develop products or services that fulfill needs.

**ON THE ROLE OF AFRICAN AMERICAN BUSINESSES IN THE OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK COMMUNITIES**

Black business has gone through a metamorphosis, in terms of the role it plays in the development of Black communities economically. Yet, the changes have not changed the basic issues. In America, economics are critical. It is incumbent upon us to connect small business development to the larger cause of improving the economic outlook of Black communities.

**ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY’s SUPPORT OF BLACK BUSINESS**

I don’t think we support our Black businesses to the extent that we can. However, there are reasons for that. Some of the reasons are subliminal. What’s beholding upon small business owners is that business is business. Business people must be mindful of the competition that exists in the marketplace. It is very, very stiff competition regardless of race. We must be sure that whenever we put out a product or service that it must be of high quality and capable of competing with anyone else’s product.

KDEE: Dedicated To Economic Empowerment

It bills itself as “Sacramento’s #1 Community Radio Station,” but KDEE 97.5 FM could easily be called The Station That Aubry Stone Built. With the backing of the business champion and a dedicated staff, the local Black-owned radio station has gained a reputation for providing good music and good information.

In December 2016, The Sacramento OBSERVER chose KDEE’s eclectic staff of on-air and behind-the-scenes personalities as its 2016 Persons of the Year, for using the airwaves to educate and empower.

The station is operated by the non-profit California Black Chamber of Commerce Foundation but Stone credited the team he assembled with making it a success. The station was “born” in 2002 when the Bill Clinton administration announced that the opportunity for community-based stations was opening up. It started out as 97.7, but was later changed to 97.5 with bandwidth expansion.

“We started at zero,” Stone told the OBSERVER. “It’s truly been a case of ‘If You Build it, They Will Come,’” he continued.

Station personalities like Jay King, host of “The Traffic Jam” show, said Stone and Station Manager Marvel Reed have given them the “greenlight” to use the station format to speak their minds. Hosts have highlighted issues such as controversial police shootings and Black on Black crime.

“We just want to be a place where people can go to get the truth,” Stone shared.

KDEE’s call letters stand for “dedicated to economic empowerment. Its mission is to “educate and empower listeners through radio programs that will help influence the hearts and minds of the community.”

Stone told the OBSERVER that while the staffers were still striving to fully fulfill that mission, he was certain that they’d hit their stride and was optimistic going into the future.

Reed agreed saying, “The radio station has grown into something that gives us a little hope, that we have a little something; that we can say; this is ours.”

**‘STONEY’ STATEMENTS**

Aubry Stone had a way with words. Here are some of the things one would likely here him say:

- “You’re either sitting at the table helping make the deal, or you’re on the menu.”
- “At the end of the day, it all comes back to economics.”
- “Fifty percent of winning is showing up.”
- “If it don’t make dollars, it don’t make sense.”
- “Hey Beautiful! (or) Hey Handsome!”

Aubry Stone is shown announcing the launching of KDEE-LP in 2003.

Aubry Stone is shown with the KDEE 97.5 FM radio team in 2016, when The OBSERVER named them “Persons Of The Year.”
“On behalf of the California Business Roundtable, we mourn the loss of such a dynamic leader and advocate for jobs in all California communities.

We will always be thankful for Aubry’s leadership, service and friendship.”

-Robert C. Lapsley
President

Aubry L. Stone
1944 - 2018

Your Fierce Dedication To The Betterment Of The African American Community Was Something To Admire And Emulate.

Thank You For Your Commitment To Our Community. We Will Miss You.
Aubry L. Stone

You Will Always Be Remembered

“I am thankful to have shared many special moments with Stoney. He made a difference in our city, state, and country. We all grieve and I will miss him.”

Larry Carr, Sacramento City Councilman, District 8
Thank you Aubry Stone for tirelessly lifting up the importance of building and supporting Black businesses.

Our community, region, state and nation are better because of your vision.
Aubry Stone, "Stoney"
A Life Well Lived,
A Lasting Legacy

Aubry Stone, also known as "Stoney," was a leader who dedicated his life to advocating for the advancement of African American business in California. He was a mentor to many of us and a friend to everyone he touched.

To continue his legacy, together, we must commit to moving his good work forward.

Rick Jennings, II, Sacramento City Councilman, District 7
R.I.P. My Friend
Ramsey Wallace Funeral Home & Chapel Inc.

FD 2137
“The Home that Service Built”

1831 Howe Avenue, Sac., Ca 95825 PH. 916-891-0500
Aubry Stone leaves an incredibly impeccable legacy. An inspirational, diligent boss, confidant and loyal friend. A GIANT in the economic development industry with a keen eye for small business development and in creating successful strategies for growth while maximizing strengths and opportunities. His loss is tremendous and heartfelt in our community at-large and we feel so very fortunate for the opportunity to have been under his life-long tutelage. Rest easy our friend — and rest in peace.

— California Black Chamber of Commerce and Foundation

California Black Chamber of Commerce
DEDICATED TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT