

ADDRESS BY FCC COMMISSIONER JAMES H. QUELLO
AT THE INDUCTION OF NEW OFFICERS FOR WGPR-TV CHANNEL 62
(America's First Black-Owned Television Station)
Omni Hotel, Detroit, Michigan
March 6, 1987

I'm delighted to be back in my home town of Detroit where I spent 28 years in broadcasting with stations WJR and WXYZ.

I'm especially pleased and proud that my home town was the birthplace of the very first Black-owned TV station in the nation and I'm honored to participate in this ceremony.

I was familiar with WGPR-TV from its inception. I visited the station several times before its opening--it became apparent that the station was going first class with the latest new equipment and production facilities. I participated in the inaugural day ceremonies. In fact, I think former Commissioner Ben Hooks and I were the first, or at least among the first, to be interviewed on channel 62 with Dr. Banks on that inaugural day.

Incidentally, I cautioned Dr. Banks and Euly Boykin that TV, and particularly a new UHF competing in a market with established VHF and UHF, is not an automatic license to coin money. But channel 62 has provided a new, pioneer service to the community. With a growing audience and the potential of pay service, the future financial outlook is promising.

469

Dr. Banks and the Board of WGPR-TV were true pioneers in Black-owned TV in the nation. They were pioneers in the full sense of the free enterprise principle--before the many significant incentives that have been established to encourage and help minority ownership--such minority incentives as SBA loans, MESBIC's (Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Corporations) provided by civic-minded broadcasters, tax certificates, expedited processing, distress sales to minorities for not more than 75% of the appraised value of the station, preference for minorities in competitive or comparative applications. The incentives were introduced in 1977 almost two years after the inauguration of channel 62 in Detroit. Channel 62 made it on its own!

So I'm pleased to be here for the induction of new officers for historic channel 62. Remember it was recorded here for all time that in Detroit a courageous group of minority entrepreneurs pioneered the very first Black-owned station in the nation--they led the way for minority ownership of the most dynamic of all media. It was a landmark, historic accomplishment for Detroit, for Michigan and for America!

Thank you for the opportunity of participating in this very significant induction of new officers. You have my very best wishes and continued staunch support for further progress, achievement and distinguished service in the promising years ahead.