

TOBACCO CONTROL

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL



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"A Chance"



Every kid deserves one. R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company sponsors the Gulf Association of the Athletics Congress and Coach Dave Bethany Scholarship Fund for giving deserving students a chance to further their education and develop their athletic skills.

Best wishes for a successful 1st Annual Scholarship Fundraiser.

RJ Reynolds

Advertisement in gala celebration programme of the Gulf Association of the Athletics Congress (GAAC) to honour coach Dave Bethany

Butts of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church, the public is being made more aware of the specific targeting of minority populations by tobacco and alcohol companies by means of direct advertising on billboards and in newspapers in minority communities, as well as by the funding of civic and educational organisations. (See figures for examples.) Ironically, it is the tobacco industry itself that most benefits as a result of its philanthropic activities. For doling out large sums to minority groups the industry has gained the support of and respect from minority leaders and has all but stifled editorial opposition to tobacco use and promotion among minorities.

Internal tobacco industry documents, released on 13 August by the health advocacy group DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), showed that Philip Morris gave more than \$17 million to minority, educational, and arts groups in 1991. According to a 24-page Philip Morris document, more than 100 African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, American Indian, and women's groups received financial support, free cigarettes, and various promotional items and favours from the corporation in 1988. In addition to the amounts of money and the dates that the funding was provided to each group, the document also describes the potential and actual support that Philip Morris received from each group on political issues as a result of providing the funding.

For example, the \$9000 that Philip Morris contributed to the National Black Caucus of State Legislators for their 12th annual conference in 1988

was sufficient for the company to note that it gained assistance from the group in opposing cigarette excise taxes and laws to restrict smoking. The \$10000 contributed to the National Association of Hispanic Journalists for its national conference in 1988 helped nurture the group's opposition to restrictions on tobacco advertising. Several California-based organisations that received monetary gifts from Philip Morris, such as Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the West Coast Black Publishers Association, the Hispanic Bar Association, and the Asian American Fund are cited as having sided with the tobacco industry in efforts to fight Proposition 99, a state-wide referendum which raised cigarette excise taxes and dedicated the funds to education and research on smoking. Similarly, following a reception and banquet sponsored by Philip Morris, the President of the Asian Business Association was noted as having agreed to "assist with Prop 99 mobilisation."

One hopeful sign was the participation by Nelson Mandela in World No-Tobacco Day 1992. The effort undertaken by the Uptown Coalition was also helpful in spite of the fact that RJ Reynolds began an aggressive campaign for Salem cigarettes ("The Box") in the inner-city, African-American neighbourhoods for which Uptown had been intended.

Clearly more must be done in order to be effective and make an impact in counteracting the tobacco industry's influence-peddling and marketing among minority communities. The US National Cancer Institute's National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer, a biennial national conference on cancer and minorities coordinated by Dr Lovell Jones of MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, Texas, and the development of the National Association of African Americans for Positive Imagery by Reverend Jesse Brown in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, may well spark more assertive community-based efforts to counteract tobacco use and promotion among minorities. Derrick Jackson, a columnist for the *Boston Globe*, has provided the call to arms in writing, "I do not want to hear another word about drugs in the black community until African-American institutions stop accepting money from cigarette and liquor companies." — ES, AB

Money talks, buys silence

According to internal documents that were turned over to the health advocacy group DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), in 1989 Philip Morris spent \$579000 in seven southwestern states in the United States to kill major smoking control bills. The world's largest tobacco company spent an additional \$158500 on regional lobbyists to influence members of the US Congress. The state bills would have restricted smoking in public places and worksites, increased cigarette taxes, and limited sales of tobacco to children. Philip Morris used the money for contributions to legislators, payment of trips, parties, lecture fees, sponsorship of legislative dinners and other events, supporting the pet charities of legislators, and support of state political caucuses.

Corporate and Political Action Committee (PAC) contributions of the tobacco conglomerate totalling \$114200 were given to over 100 elected officials and both the Democrat and Republican parties. Money was targeted primarily at the most influential members of the legislature. For example, a Philip Morris lobbyist stated that in Arizona the company would "concentrate on leadership and committee chairs in the Senate," and in Kansas it would "shift attention to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee to stop bad bills." According to the documents, Philip Morris could have given more money but did not do so: "We gave about \$11000 in Kansas to legislators. It may not seem like much, but that's the most we could give without sticking out like a sore thumb."

The documents reveal a kind of Philip Morris-generated welfare system, in which the only eligible recipients are elected officials. The company paid for trips to New York for legislators, some of whom also received honoraria. In Kansas, for example, "the program involved informal meetings with legislative participation secured by the payment of honorarium." The 1990 lobbying budget called for \$10000 for two New York City trips and \$15000 for a "buck hunt" for Texas legislators.

Although Americans claim to believe that there is no such thing as a "free lunch," their leaders might not share the same view. In 1989 alone in five states Philip Morris hosted nine legislative dinners and receptions for legislators at a cost of more than \$30000. In Arizona Philip Morris spent \$13000 to sponsor a reception