



UW-Whitewater Creative Enterprise Symposium

Profile: **Matthew A. Johnson** - Johnson Media Consulting LLC, Milwaukee

Milwaukee native, Matthew A. Johnson graduated with a Bachelor's degree in engineering from Northern Michigan University and is the youngest of eight children. All eight children graduated from high school, college and hold several advanced degrees. Matthew first gained national entrepreneurship attention in Milwaukee as the founder of a nonprofit organization called *The Strive Media Institute*, an after school program that helped to train central city minorities and at-risk teens in broadcast media and journalism.

Over a span of 18 years, between 1990 and 2008 the institute garnered a national reputation for providing a diverse population of young people access to employable skills in media that helped to teach teens to become better thinkers, writers, and producers. As many as 500 students went through a rigorous yearlong four-year training program offered by Strive. Many of the students that came through the doors of Strive went on to become successful media industry professionals with networks such as *ABC, Black Entertainment Television, CNN and NBC*. Johnson helped finance those early ventures with savings he built up from years of working as a cigarette sales executive for Philip Morris, a company he quit in the late 1980s because he didn't believe in the job anymore.

Several year later after lack of support for the institute and it's eventual closing, Matthew remained committed to helping people in the Milwaukee area and became focused on a mission designed to promote better health care among a population of African-Americans, Latinos and people of color that he believes need the support to help address disparities in health care, including diabetes, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, infant nutrition, breast cancer, mental illness, nutrition and cardiopulmonary disease.

In 2009 Matthew became the publisher of "*Girlfriends Health Guide*," and "*Fellas a Men's Guide to Healthy Living*," dual quarterly advertising-supported magazines focused on the latest in healthy living that he publishes through his firm, Johnson Media Consulting LLC, Milwaukee. Through these latest efforts he also established an upstart foundation dedicated in memory of his late mother and father: *The Rayfield & Ida M. Johnson Foundation*. The foundation is designed to support health care needs of minorities in Milwaukee by disseminating valuable information to targeted male and female audiences — minority populations in Milwaukee.

These publications serve as communication tools while engaging and inspiring men and women to come together for the betterment of our entire community. Matthew states that: "*I'm just trying to make a difference. Wherever I go and what ever I do, I want to make a difference.*"