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**The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey's
Announces promotion of Carmen Gates and Vivian Harmon
to AACCNJ Senior Leadership.**

(TRENTON, NJ – October 2, 2024) The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) announces the promotion of Carmen Gates and Vivian Harmon to AACCNJ Senior Leadership. Carmen Gates will serve as *Vice President of Community Development and External Affairs Officer* and Vivian Harmon, LSW will serve as *Executive Director, Training & Development Institute* effective October 1, 2024.

“I am excited to announce these promotions, and I look forward to working with both Carmen and Vivian as part of our Senior Leadership team. The work they do every day is essential to the mission of the organization, strengthening black businesses and our communities. We will continue to design strategies that will derive value for our members and those that invest in the mission of AACCNJ while contributing to the competitiveness of New Jersey,” said **John E. Harmon, Sr.**, IOM, Founder, President, & CEO, AACCNJ.

Carmen Gates has served as the *Director of Training and Community Initiatives since 2021*. Carmen oversees the day-to-day operations of Training and Community based initiative programming structured to meet the goals, objectives and services delivered commensurate with the mission of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ).

She works closely with the President/CEO and staff of the AACCNJ and other stakeholders to establish and manage a fast-paced, highly efficient scope of services and duties, educational activities, and other outreach efforts to enhance awareness and the value proposition of the AACCNJ. Carmen hosts and participates in meetings with Government Agencies; at the State, County and Municipal levels, Elected Officials, Higher Education, K-12 Educational Institutions, Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations, Faith Based, Community Organizations and all other stakeholders.

She brings over 25 years of Administrative and Community Outreach to the AACCNJ with experience in planning, training, operations, program management and reporting. She has served successfully in the Assessment/Information Technology, Media, Hospitality, Medical and Legal sectors.

In her new role, Carmen will lead AACCNJ on-going community development initiatives including partnering with leading corporations in New Jersey to create sustainable programs on Economic Inequalities, Healthcare Disparities and Inequalities and Workforce Diversity and Inclusion.

Carmen was born, raised, and educated in the great state of New Jersey and holds a degree in Paralegal Studies.

"I am grateful for this opportunity to serve in this new role that aligns with my passion for community engagement and external relations", said Carmen Gates. "This promotion is not just a personal achievement; it reflects the collective effort of our dedicated team. I look forward to leveraging our resources to foster community development and strengthen our external partnerships.

I am excited to take on this new role and contribute to our mission in meaningful ways. Thank you for your trust and support."

Vivian Harmon, who joined AACCNJ in 2022 as Senior Director for the Training and Development Institute, has been an integral part of the development and expansion of TDI. Under her leadership, hundreds of New Jersey residents have benefited from innovative workforce development programs that help individuals enter or re-enter the workforce, and businesses grow and thrive. A licensed social worker, Harmon's work embodies the principles of TDI: empowering people, forging meaningful partnerships, and positively influencing policy to shape the state's economic landscape.

Over 2 decades Harmon has dedicated her career to empowering youth, adults, and families through education, trauma-informed care, and advocacy. With a diverse background that spans adolescent residential care, student services in both secondary and higher education, and intensive community counseling, Vivian has been a champion for marginalized communities. Her leadership roles at organizations like Emily Fisher Charter School and LifeTies, Inc. allowed her to create impactful programs for at-risk youth, including counseling services, alternative education programs, and advocacy for LGBTQIA youth. A Rutgers University alumna with degrees in Political Science, Education, and Social Work, Vivian's work is rooted in her commitment to advancing equity and inclusion for disenfranchised populations. Over the next decade, she remains steadfast in her mission to foster greatness in individuals, families, and communities through empowerment, advocacy, and unwavering support.

"I am deeply grateful for this opportunity to further my commitment to serving the people of New Jersey," said Vivian Harmon. "This role allows me to continue uplifting individuals, families, and businesses, while forging meaningful partnerships and pushing for advances in equity and inclusion for those who have been systemically overlooked, overburdened, and forgotten. Together, we will work today to innovate the workforce of tomorrow, creating new pathways for those seeking opportunity and change."

<https://www.aaccnj.com/meet-the-staff>

About the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey

The African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (AACCNJ) is dedicated to economically empowering and sustaining African American communities and businesses through entrepreneurship and capitalistic initiatives throughout the state of New Jersey and through its partnership with the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc. AACCNJ joins the top 3% of all chambers in the U.S. that are accredited, is the only accredited chamber in New Jersey, and is the only accredited African American chamber in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Federation.

The AACCNJ performs an essential role in the economic viability of New Jersey. While providing a platform for New Jersey's African American business leaders to speak with a collective voice, the AACCNJ advocates and promotes economic diversity fostering a climate of business growth through major initiatives centering on education and public policy. The Chamber serves as a proactive advocacy group with a 501(c) 3 tax exemption, which is shared by the National Black Chamber of Commerce.