

**THE BLACK PROFESSIONAL IN THE YMCA: OCCUPATIONAL  
INFORMATION, PERSONAL DATA, AND PERSONAL FEELINGS**

by

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

The idea for this survey originated during the writer's initial experience as a Young Men's Christian Association director. At that time, this writer would have appreciated having a condensation of occupational information about the Black in the YMCA. Also, this writer felt that information concerning personal data and personal occupational feelings of the Black YMCA director could have provided a basis for guidance to new directors. This survey was carried out with the idea of providing recreation students with occupational information regarding the Black in the YMCA.

### PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

It was the purpose of this survey to:

1. provide occupational information about the Black in the YMCA.
2. provide information concerning the personal data and personal occupational feelings about the Black in the YMCA.
3. develop an informational resource of the Black in the YMCA for recreation students.

## THE PROBLEM

The problem of the report was to determine the kinds of professional positions Blacks held in the YMCA, their backgrounds and their personal occupational feelings about the YMCA.

Therefore, it was necessary to develop an instrument which could be used to survey the occupational information, personal data, and personal occupational feelings of the Black in the YMCA.

## LIMITS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The survey was limited to Black professional directors in the Mid-America Region of YMCA's. The region includes the states of Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin.

Also, it was impossible to survey all Black directors in the region because of the personnel turnover in the YMCA.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although there was a collection of data on the Black YMCA professional housed at the National YMCA Office, it was not available in a published format. A directory of the members of the YMCA Black and Non-White Association (BAN-WYS), which contained the directors' employment location, was available.

One of the most pertinent demonstrations of the opportunity for vertical and horizontal mobility by the Black is the visibility of individuals of ethnic identity (4). The opportunity for experienced personnel to exchange occupational information with new or prospective personnel is part of the reasoning behind doing this report. The review of literature will deal with the occupational information and background of Blacks in the related field of recreation.

Recreation education graduates provide a considerable amount of voluntary agency employment. In a recent recreation education curricula study, the Black enrollment at the undergraduate level showed 1,025 students, 82 enrolled at the master's level and five enrolled at the doctoral level (5:17). The YMCA offers an opportunity for these students to put their education to work.

Again, in a recent study of recreation education curricula, it was revealed Blacks hold 24 faculty positions (5:21). Also, when these positions are included with all faculty positions identified in the



study, the doctorate degree represents 51% of the highest degree earned, the master's degree 42.9%, the bachelor's degree 3.1%, and the directorate degree 3% (5:19). The directorate degree, which is offered at the University of Indiana, was a program designed with the practitioner in mind. In contrast, the doctorate was a research degree.

A study of recreation employment of 24 suburban communities of New York City with at least a seven percent population revealed eight Blacks (Negroes) employed at the administrative level, ten Blacks (Negroes) at the supervisory level, and 405 Blacks (Negroes) employed at the other positions (2:74).

A study of the park department of five boroughs of New York City revealed five Blacks (Negroes) employed at the administrative level, five at the supervisory level, and 123 at the leadership level (2:75).

In a report of 198 minority personnel employed in leisure delivery services in Illinois, ten were employed in administrative positions, 78 had some college training, 19 were affiliated with the National Recreation and Park Association, 78 were employed in the Chicago area, and 13 were located downstate (3).

Table 1 shows the number of disadvantaged workers in occupational categories in a recent study conducted by the NRPA (1). This table did not show the number of Blacks included in the term disadvantaged. However, the term does include minorities, handicapped, elderly and the poor. This report gives the reader an indication of the kinds of positions held by the disadvantaged in parks and recreation.

TABLE 1  
 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND EMPLOYMENT NUMBERS OF THE DISADVANTAGED  
 IN RECREATION AND PARKS IN 25 CITIES

Occupational Categories	Number of Disadvantaged Workers
Recreation Supervisors	3
Foremen	5
District Supervisors of Recreation	11
Related Park Professionals	14
Administrative Support Staff	18
Park Rangers	22
Recreation Facility Supervisors	23
Community Center Director	35
Activity Specialist	39
Clerical	42
Attendants and Aides	122
Skilled Park Personnel	128
Recreation Program Leaders	251
Semi and Non Skilled Personnel	709
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,422</b>

The apparent lack of published data on the Black professional in the recreation field suggests a need for further research in voluntary, industrial, commercial, governmental, and educational settings. This report was an effort to contribute information about the Black professional in a voluntary setting.

## Chapter 3

### METHOD OF PROCEDURE

For this report the regional director of the Mid-America YMCA was contacted for feedback on the feasibility of such a project. He suggested that each YMCA director be sent a questionnaire.

Next, this writer contacted the YMCA National Office and requested a printout of Black professional directors in the Mid-America Region. Other organizations contacted for possible information having a bearing on this report were the National Recreation and Park Association, the National Industrial Recreation Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Boy and Girl Scouts of America, and the Boys' Clubs of America.

The writer followed standard procedure in developing the questionnaire. It should be labeled confidential; be short enough so that it will not be rejected by the subjects; be of sufficient interest to elicit a definite response; and elicit valid responses.

As a follow-up, eight of ten directors identified from the national printout and who had not returned a questionnaire were contacted by phone. The national printout identified 35 active directors in the region. However, five of the directors were no longer employed in the YMCA. Table 2 describes the results of the survey returns by states.

TABLE 2  
RESULTS OF THE SURVEY RETURNS BY STATES

States	Returns by Mail	Interviewed by Phone
Colorado	3	1
Illinois	4	1
Iowa	1	
Kansas	1	
Minnesota	3	1
Missouri	4	5
Nebraska	1	
Wisconsin	3	
N = 28	20	8

The results of the report were presented categorically using the titles of occupational information, personal data and personal occupational feelings. The discussion was presented in a question-answer format. The writer followed up with a summary of the procedures, conclusions and recommendations.

## Chapter 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULTS

##### Occupational Information

The YMCA professional positions were categorized into administrative and program levels. The survey revealed 16 directors in administrative positions and 12 directors holding program positions.

TABLE 3  
POSITIONS HELD BY THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Positions	Frequency	Percent
Administration	16	57
Program	12	43
N = 28	28	100

It should be noted that two of the directors were not responsible for budgets. The average budget responsibility held by the directors was more than \$25,000 and less than \$125,000. It was found that two of the directors were responsible for budgets less than \$10,000 and two directors were responsible for budgets less than \$25,000. Also, nine directors were responsible for budgets less than \$75,000. Furthermore, three directors were responsible for budgets

less than \$125,000 and three were responsible for budgets less than \$200,000. It should be noted that seven directors were responsible for budgets over \$200,000.

TABLE 4  
BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Budget Responsibility	Frequency	Percent
None*	2	7
Less than \$ 10,000	2	7
Less than \$ 25,000	2	7
Less than \$ 75,000	9	32
Less than \$125,000	3	11
Less than \$200,000	3	11
\$201,000 - over	7	25
N = 28	28	100

\*These directors were not responsible for budgets.

The annual salaries of five of the directors were less than \$9,000, nine made less than \$14,000, and ten made less than \$20,000. It should be noted that four of the directors made over \$20,000.

TABLE 5  
SALARIES OF THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Salaries	Frequency	Percent
\$ 6,000 - \$ 8,900	5	18
\$ 9,000 - \$13,999	9	32
\$14,000 - \$19,999	10	36
\$20,000 - over	4	14
N = 28	28	100

In this survey it was found that the largest share of directors were located in Missouri with N = 9. Illinois had five directors, Colorado and Minnesota followed with four as shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
LOCATION OF YMCA DIRECTORS BY STATES

States	Frequency	Percent
Colorado	4	14
Illinois	5	18
Iowa	1	4
Kansas	1	4
Minnesota	4	14
Missouri	9	32
Nebraska	1	4
Wisconsin	3	10
N = 28	28	100

Also the survey revealed that eight of the directors had been employed with the YMCA less than three years, eight directors less

than eight years, three directors less than 13 years and nine directors less than 20 years.

TABLE 7  
DIRECTORS' LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE YMCA

Years	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3 years	8	29
Less than 8 years	8	29
Less than 13 years	3	10
Less than 20 years	9	32
N = 28	28	100

The survey discovered that three of the directors did not work in YMCA service facilities. Nine of the directors worked in a facility less than ten years old. Five of the directors worked in a facility less than 30 years old and six worked in a facility less than 60 years old. Again, five of the directors worked in a facility less than 100 years old.



TABLE 8  
THE AGE OF THE FACILITIES IN WHICH THE YMCA DIRECTORS WORK

Age of Facilities	Frequency	Percent
None*	3	11
1 - 10 years	9	32
11 - 30 years	5	18
31 - 60 years	6	21
61 - 100 years	5	18
over - 101 years		
N = 28	28	100

\*Three of the directors did not work in service facilities.

The program emphasis was children of the YMCA's where the Black directors were employed.

TABLE 9  
PROGRAM EMPHASIS OF YMCA'S THAT EMPLOY BLACK DIRECTORS

Priorities	Frequency	Percent
Children	13	46
Adult	9	32
Family	4	14
Special Populations	2	8
N = 28	28	100

The constituency emphasis was Black of the YMCA's where the Black directors were employed.

TABLE 10  
CONSTITUENCY EMPHASIS OF YMCA'S THAT EMPLOY BLACK DIRECTORS

Constituency	Frequency	Percent
None*	3	11
Black	14	50
White	7	25
Spanish American	2	7
Indian	2	7
N = 28	28	100

Personal Data

The survey revealed that there were three female directors of the 28 identified for the report.

TABLE 11  
BREAKDOWN OF MALE AND FEMALE DIRECTORS

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Males	25	89
Females	3	11
N = 28	28	100

The average age of the directors was 37. Fifteen of the directors were between the ages of 22 and 32.

TABLE 12  
AGES OF THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Ages	Frequency	Percent
22 - 32	15	54
33 - 42	4	14
43 - 52	6	21
53 - 62	3	11
N = 28	28	100

Now, with respect to the education preparation of the directors, four had a high school education, 24 had completed college, and 16 had pursued advanced degrees.

TABLE 13  
EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION OF THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Education	Frequency	Percent
High School	4	14
College	8	29
Advanced Study	16	57
N = 28	28	100

The survey revealed that 22 of the directors belonged to the Association of Professional Directors.

TABLE 14  
DIRECTORS THAT BELONG TO ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORS

APD	Frequency	Percent
Members	22	79
Non-members	6	21
N = 28	28	100

Also, nine of the directors belonged to BAN-WYS.

TABLE 15  
DIRECTORS THAT BELONG TO BAN-WYS

BAN-WYS	Frequency	Percent
Members	9	32
Non-members	19	68
N = 28	28	100

There was a variety of titles of the positions held by the YMCA directors indicating the diversity of job responsibilities within the YMCA. The titles had a spread over services from youth, family, adults, and special populations.

TABLE 16  
TITLES OF THE YMCA DIRECTORS

Titles	N = 28
<b>Administrative</b>	
Executive director	11
Associate director	1
Assistant general director	1
Vice president	1
Urban district director	1
Assistant director	1
Business men's club	1
<b>Program</b>	
Assistant physical director	2
Outreach director	2
Extension director	1
Youth and Family director	1
Inner urban director	1
Program director - High school	1
Physical director	1
Family program director	1
Outreach worker	1
Detached worker	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>

Personal Occupational Feelings

All of the directors were asked to express their occupational feelings concerning the reasons they chose the YMCA as a profession, the advantages and disadvantages of the profession, and where they would see themselves in the YMCA in ten years.

As can be seen in Table 17, the opportunity to work with people and the need for employment were the most frequent reasons for choosing the YMCA as a profession. Another reason that had strong support was the opportunity to work with youth.

TABLE 17  
REASONS WHY DIRECTORS CHOSE THE YMCA AS A PROFESSION

Reasons	
Opportunity to work with people	8
Need of employment	5
Youth outreach work	4
Opportunity to work with youth	4
Creativity and freedom	3
Former YMCA volunteer	3
Advancement potential	2
Related to educational preparation	2
Religious component	2
Social service outreach	2
Y as a service agency	2
Stepping stone	1
YMCA influence as an organization	1
No Blacks in the YMCA	1
Salary	1
Philosophy of the YMCA	1
Group work	1
Innovation of programs	1
Non-traditional work	1
Total responses*	45

\*There were 17 directors that responded twice, and 11 directors responded once.

One glance at Table 18 quickly shows two advantages which were listed most frequently by the directors. First, the opportunity to

work with people and second was the opportunity for innovation. The next two advantages mentioned were professional development and flexible programming.

TABLE 18  
ADVANTAGES OF THE YMCA PROFESSION

Advantages	
Working with people	8
Opportunity for innovation	5
Professional development	4
Flexible programming	4
Advancement potential	3
Established organization	3
Work with cross-section of society	2
Work with community leaders	2
Professional skills gained	1
Chance to involve Blacks	1
None	1
Security	1
Credibility of the YMCA	1
Opportunity to travel	1
Working with youth	1
The Y creates employment and educational opportunities	1
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>39</b>

\*There were 14 directors that responded twice, and 11 directors responded once.

The major disadvantages of working for the YMCA were the long hours required. There were 13 directors who felt that was the major disadvantage. Low salaries was next on the list of disadvantages. Also, upward mobility and limited financial resources were major concerns of the YMCA directors. Being tied to the power structure was felt to be a disadvantage by two of the directors.

TABLE 19  
DISADVANTAGES OF THE YMCA PROFESSION

Disadvantages	
Long hours	13
Low salaries	7
Upward mobility	3
Limited financial resources	3
Preoccupied with fund raising	2
Tied to the power structure	2
No set schedule	1
Poor image of the YMCA	1
Must have degree	1
None	1
Lack of funds	1
Lack of professional development training	1
Not enough Black involvement	1
Promotion requires movement	1
Oriented toward Whites	1
Does not relate to poor	1
Bound by tradition	1
High work load per staff	1
Black directors steered toward Black YMCA's instead of White YMCA's	1
<b>Total responses*</b>	<b>43</b>

\*There were 15 directors that responded twice and 13 directors responded once.

Table 20 shows the responses to the question: Where do you see yourself in the YMCA in ten years? Ten of the directors responded to the question, "Not in the YMCA." Furthermore, five directors indicated they would retire in the next ten years. In ten years two of the directors would like to be in a branch executive position.



TABLE 20

WHERE THE DIRECTORS SEE THEMSELVES IN TEN YEARS IN THE YMCA

Aspirations	N = 28
Not in the YMCA	15
Branch executive	2
Director	2
Program director	1
Assistant executive	1
General agency staff	1
Program consultant	1
General executive-metropolitan staff	1
Associate general director-metropolitan association	1
Executive director-metropolitan association	1
Administrator	1
Outreach director	1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>28</b>

## DISCUSSION

What Position Levels in the YMCA  
Pay the Highest Salary

It was found that nine of the directors who held administrative positions made over \$14,000 and only one program director earned over \$14,000. Table 21 shows the breakdown.

TABLE 21  
SALARIES VS. POSITIONS IN THE YMCA

Salaries	Administration	Positions	Program
\$ 6,000 - 8,999	1		4
\$ 9,000 - 13,999	2		7
\$14,000 - 19,999	9		1
\$20,000 - over	4		
N = 28	16		12

What Are the Ages of the YMCA Directors  
in Both Position Levels

In the 22 to 32 age bracket there were five directors holding administrative positions and ten holding program positions. In the 33 to 42 age bracket three directors held administrative positions and one held a program position. In the 43 to 52 age bracket six directors held administrative positions. In the 53 to 62 age bracket two directors held administrative positions and one held a program position. It appears that the administrative positions call for longer length of service in the YMCA.

TABLE 22  
AGE VS. POSITION LEVELS IN THE YMCA

Ages	Administration	Positions	Program
22 - 32	5		10
33 - 42	3		1
43 - 52	6		
53 - 62	2		1
N = 28	16		12

What Are the Salaries of the Different Age Groups

In the 22 to 32 age bracket five of the directors earned between \$6,000 and \$8,999, five of them between \$9,000 and \$13,999, three of them earned between \$14,000 and \$19,999 and two of them over \$20,000. In the 33 to 42 age bracket two of the directors earned between \$9,000 and \$13,999, and two of them earned between \$14,000 and \$19,999. In the 43 to 52 age bracket five of the directors earned between \$14,000 and \$19,999 and one of them over \$20,000. In the 53 to 62 age bracket one of the directors earned \$6,000 to \$8,999, one of them earned \$9,000 to \$13,999, and another earned over \$20,000. It seems as though the higher salaries favor those who are older.

TABLE 23  
AGE VS. SALARIES

Ages	Salaries			
	6,000-8,999	9,000-13,999	14,000-19,999	over 20,000
22 - 32	5	5	3	2
33 - 42		2	2	
43 - 52			5	1
53 - 62	1	1		1
N = 28	6	8	10	4

What Position Levels Serve the Various  
YMCA Constituencies

In those YMCA's whose largest constituency was Black, five directors held administrative positions and nine held program positions. Those YMCA's whose largest constituency was White represented seven administrative positions. YMCA's whose largest constituency was Spanish American represented one administrative position and two program positions. The YMCA serving an Indian constituency represented one administrative and program position. There were three directors who did not work in a service facility. Blacks seem to be moving into administrative positions in previously all White positions.

TABLE 24  
 CONSTITUENCIES SERVED VS. POSITION LEVELS

	Administrative	Positions	Program
None*	3		
Black	5		9
White	7		
Spanish American			2
Indian	1		1
N = 28	16		12

\*Three of the directors did not work in a service facility.

What is the Length of Service of Those Directors  
 in Both Position Levels

The survey revealed that nine of the administrators had been with the YMCA between 14 and 20 years, three of them had been with the YMCA 4 to 8 years, two of them 9 to 13 years and two of them up to three years. The majority of directors in program positions had been there 4 to 8 years, while the majority of administrative positions had been held 14 to 20 years.

TABLE 25

## LENGTH OF SERVICE VS. BOTH POSITION LEVELS IN THE YMCA

	0 - 3	4 - 8	9 - 13	14 - 20
Program	3	7	2	
Administrative	2	3	2	9
N = 28	5	10	4	9

What Level of Positions are Located in the  
Different Size YMCA's

The survey showed in large YMCA's there were seven administrative positions and six program positions held by the directors. In the medium YMCA's there were six administrative positions and four program positions. Only one administrative and one program position was found in a small YMCA. The directors used their own criteria for determining one of three size classifications selected in describing their YMCA. It appears that a new director may have a better opportunity to enter the YMCA in either position level in a large YMCA.

TABLE 26  
 SIZE OF YMCA VS. POSITION LEVELS

Size of YMCA's	Administrative	Positions	Program
None*	3		
Large	7		6
Medium	6		4
Small	1		1
N = 28	17		11

\*Three of the directors did not work in a service facility.

This writer feels that further exploration of two areas mentioned in the results of the report would add to the discussion and clarification of the Black in the YMCA.

First, it was noted that seven of the directors handled budgets over \$200,000. The survey shows that these directors had pursued advanced study and their YMCA's were located in metropolitan areas.

Secondly, in reporting their personal occupational feelings, three of the directors felt that advancement potential was an advantage of working for the YMCA and three of the directors felt that upward mobility was a disadvantage of working for the YMCA. This writer feels a look at the background of these individuals who differ would be interesting to the reader. The three directors who felt upward mobility was a disadvantage held college degrees, one held a program position and two held administration positions. Also, their budget responsibilities were less than \$75,000. The three directors

who felt advancement potential was an advantage all had pursued advanced degrees, all three held administrative positions and were responsible for budgets over \$125,000.



## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Procedure

It was the purpose of this report to provide occupational information, personal data, and personal occupational feelings concerning the Black in the YMCA. The YMCA's included in the study were in the Mid-America Region. Those directors that participated in the report were located in the following states: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. An instrument was developed to survey the YMCA directors. The review of literature for this report focused on the Black in the field of recreation.

#### Findings

The findings of this report are as follows:

1. There was a higher percentage of administrative positions held by the directors than program positions.
2. There were more male directors than female.
3. Missouri was the state where most of the directors were employed.
4. The program emphasis was children of the YMCA's that employed the directors.
5. The major reason for choosing the YMCA as a profession was the opportunity to work with people. This reason was also given as the major advantage of working for the YMCA.