

# DON H. BARDEN

## Biography

Don H. Barden is owner, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Barden Companies, Inc., The Majestic Star and Fitzgeralds Casinos and Hotels, and Waycor Development Company. In December 2001, Mr. Barden acquired the Fitzgeralds Casino Hotel with properties in Las Vegas, Mississippi and Colorado; additionally acquiring Trump Indiana Casino and Hotel in 2005. His conglomerate operates in the casino, real estate development and entertainment industries from his corporate headquarters in downtown Detroit.

The ninth of 13 children, Mr. Barden was born in Detroit, educated in the public school system in Inkster, Mich., and attended Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. He holds three (3) Honorary Doctorate degrees.

With a business career spanning more than 40 years, Mr. Barden is recognized as one of the top black entrepreneurs in the country. He has guided Barden Companies and its affiliates from earnings of \$600,000 to 2008 revenues of more than \$400 million, making it one of the largest African American-owned businesses in the country. Mr. Barden was recently listed among the “150 Most Influential Blacks in America.” by Ebony Magazine.

Prior to establishing Barden Companies, Mr. Barden spent 20 years in Lorain, Ohio, where he became the first elected black city councilman in Lorain history and served two terms before leaving to pursue other business endeavors. He founded a weekly newspaper, the *Lorain County Times* and served five years as the publication’s publisher and editor. As news anchor for WUAB-TV in Lorain and host of a weekly talk show for the NBC affiliate in Cleveland, Mr. Barden spent 11 years as an on-air personality in Ohio.

In Lorain, during the 1970’s, Mr. Barden founded and directed a successful real estate development company with properties valued at more than \$6 million. He worked with various community organizations: the Lorain County Community Action Agency, the Federation of Human Resources, Junior Achievement, the Fraternal Order of Police, the NAACP and the Lorain Chamber of Commerce. He also organized a voter registration drive for minorities in Lorain County.

He has been active in his hometown as well. In 1991 and 1992, Mr. Barden took the lead in efforts to revitalize Detroit by organizing a series of Regional Economic Peace Summits to address the problems of crime, national image and economic development. The summits drew widespread support throughout the metropolitan Detroit region. Over 200 area leaders participated in the sessions, including chief judges, county executives, mayors, city council members, prosecutors, police officials, sheriffs, corrections personnel and business executives.

Mr. Barden successfully built, owned and operated cable television systems in Inkster, Romulus, Van Buren and Detroit, Mich., making Barden Cablevision one of the nation’s largest urban cable systems. In December 1994, Mr. Barden sold all of his cable television holdings to Comcast Cable for an amount in excess of \$100 million. He is no longer involved in the cable industry.

Waycor Development Company, Mr. Barden’s real estate development unit, has successfully completed a number of diverse projects, including a \$61.5 million, 840-bed detention facility for Wayne County in Hamtramck, Mich.; Chene Park Commons, a \$10 million, 144-unit multi-family residential rental development in Detroit; and Clairpointe of Victoria Woods, a 41-unit luxury single family subdivision, also in Detroit.

Mr. Barden owned and operated five radio stations in Illinois: WKBM-FM in Coal City, WKOT-FM in Ottawa, and WJOL-AM, WJTW-FM and WLLI-FM in Joliet. In February 1998, Mr. Barden sold all of his broadcasting holdings and is no longer in the radio industry. He was also majority owner (51%) of NovaNET Learning, Inc., a computer-based interactive educational software company. He sold his interest in the company in 1999.

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In December 1994, Barden Development, Inc. was awarded a Certificate of Suitability for a license to own and operate a Riverboat Casino in Gary, Ind. The Majestic Star Casino, at the time the only African American owned casino, opened to the public on June 11, 1996, with 932 slot machines and 50 table games. One year later, Mr. Barden launched a \$50 million gambling vessel to replace his existing casino in Gary. The new Majestic Star contains 43,000 square feet of casino gambling on three decks, making it among the five largest gaming vessels on U.S. waters.

In February 1996, Mr. Barden established Barden International, Inc., in Namibia, Africa. The firm is engaged in the automotive processing, upfit, conversion and distribution business, and is one of the largest private investments in southern Africa. In 1998, Barden International was the General Motors Overseas Distribution Corporation's "Dealer of the Year." Mr. Barden continues to pursue other business opportunities on the African continent. Mr. Barden sold his interest in Barden International in 2005.

In 1997, Mr. Barden led the only African American controlled group of investors in a highly competitive bid for one of the licenses for a casino in Detroit – a bid that included a massive theme park not offered by the other applicants. Despite being the only African American in the bidding process who had been licensed previously, assembling a strong group of executives with demonstrated financial capabilities and bringing in an internationally famous pop star as an investor in the theme park, Mr. Barden's bid was not accepted. The ensuing debate over the objectivity of the process and the treatment of African American bidders caused the winning majority group bidders to increase the shares of stock given to their minority investors.

In 1999, Mr. Barden was named developer for the Gary, IN waterfront project. In conjunction with the venture, he purchased 187 acres of real estate on the Gary riverfront adjacent to his Majestic Star Casino. This major undertaking is a joint effort between Mr. Barden and the City of Gary, with a total estimated cost of \$300 million to be developed over time.

In December 2001, Mr. Barden purchased three Fitzgeralds casinos located in Black Hawk, Colo., Tunica, Miss., and downtown Las Vegas.

The 2005 acquisition of Trump Indiana, now called Majestic Star II, has positioned the company to become the most competitive gaming operation in the Chicagoland market. Mr. Barden owns a total of five casino properties, and is the country's first African American to wholly own a national casino gaming company. Majestic Star now operates in three of the top five gaming markets in the U.S. All 5 casinos combined have approximately 6000 slots, 185 table games, 1,400 hotel rooms and approximately 4,000 employees.

On December 20, 2006, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board voted unanimously to award Mr. Barden the sole license to construct a \$460 million casino on Pittsburgh's North Shore, near the Ohio River. In securing the license, Mr. Barden beat out two other groups; Forest City Enterprises, who partnered with Harrah's Entertainment, and Isle of Capri Casinos, who partnered with the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Mr. Barden maintains a strong commitment to Detroit and is active in many civic and business groups including Detroit Renaissance, Inc., the Booker T. Washington Business Association, the Detroit Regional Chamber, Henry Ford Health Systems and Wayne State University Foundation.

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Awards and Recognitions

*Mr. Barden's professional accomplishments and community efforts have often been recognized with awards and honors. A selected list follows.*

- 1973: MBDD "Minority 100" Business Achievement Award for "Outstanding Achievement."
- 1980: "Outstanding Contributions" to the White House Conference of Small Businesses Award, presented by President Jimmy Carter.
- 1975-82: "Outstanding Leadership," Lorain County (Ohio) Community Action Agency.
- 1983: "Focus and Impact Award," Oakland University, Rochester, Mich.  
Named "Businessman of the Year," by The Gentlemen of Wall Street.
- 1989: "Outstanding Minority Entrepreneurship Award" & "Distinguished Achievement Award," Detroit Branch NAACP during its National Convention.
- 1991: "Economic Achievement Award," Michigan Chapter of the SCLC.  
"Education Image Award," the United Negro College Fund.  
"Appreciation Award," National Association of Minorities in Cable.  
"Excellence in Media Award," B.A.R.T. (Blacks in Advertising, Radio and Television).  
"Outstanding Entrepreneur Award," Metropolitan Center for High Technology.
- 1992: Named "Michiganian of the Year," by *The Detroit News*.  
Named "Company of the Year" (Barden Communications), by *Black Enterprise* magazine.  
Named "One of the top Black-owned businesses in the U.S.," by *The Wall Street Journal*.  
Appointed to the Michigan State Officers' Compensation Commission by then-Gov. John Engler. (Named commission chairman in 1994.)
- 1997: "Spirit of Detroit Award," the Detroit City Council.  
Fannie Lou Hamer "Keep the Spirit Moving Award."  
"Outstanding Image Maker," Detroit Public Schools Living History Program.
- 2002: Named "largest Black Owned Business" by Crains Detroit Business.
- 2003: Named National Finance Co-Chair, by Dick Gephardt for President Campaign.
- 2003: Named "Company of the Year" by Black Enterprise Magazine.
- 2003: Named "Master Entrepreneur of the Year" by Ernst & Young, LLP
- 2003: Named one of "Michigan's Most Powerful African American Leaders" by Corp Magazine.
- 2004: Named recipient of "2004 Trumpet Award" presented by Turner Broadcasting System for enormous contributions in business.
- 2006: Named to "Southeastern Michigan Business Hall of Fame" by Junior Achievement of Michigan.
- 2007: Named one of the "150 Most Influential Blacks in America" by Ebony Magazine

**In addition, Mr. Barden holds Honorary Doctorate of Laws degrees from Lewis College of Business and Marygrove College, both located in Detroit, Michigan; and Tiffin University located in Tiffin, Ohio.**

## **DON IL BARDEN**

### **Chronological Highlights**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Event</u>
1965	21	Opened a Retail Record Outlet
1967	23	Started Newspaper, <i>The Lorain County Times</i>
1970	26	TV News Anchorman and Local Talk Show Host (11 years combined, part-time)
1971	27	Formed Real Estate Development Company (subsequent holdings more than \$6 million)
1975	31	Developer/Owner of Commerce Office Building, Inkster, Mich.; \$1 Million
1977	33	Developer/Owner of Mid-Town Plaza, Canton, Ohio; \$4 Million
1981	37	Awarded the Inkster Cable Franchise
1982	38	Awarded the Romulus, Mich., and Van Buren Township, Mich., Cable Franchises
1983	39	Awarded the Detroit Cable Franchise
1989	45	Awarded Development of \$61.5 Million Jail Facility in Hamtramck, Mich.
1989	45	Purchased and Leased Marygrove College Facility
1989	45	Constructed FM Radio Station in Coal City, Ill.
1991	47	Constructed Chene Commons, a 144-unit Apartment Complex in Detroit
1992	48	Constructed FM Radio Station in Ottawa, Ill.
1992	48	Purchased the 40,000 Square Foot Madison Building in Detroit
1993	49	Applied for License to Own/Operate a Riverboat Casino in Gary, Ind.
1994	50	Awarded License to Own/Operate a Riverboat Casino in Gary
1994	50	Sold Interest in Barden Cablevision to Comcast Corp.
1995	50	Acquired Radio Stations WJOL-AM and WLLI-FM in Joliet, Ill.
1995	51	Acquired Radio Station WJTW-FM in Joliet
1995	51	Acquired Controlling Interest in NovaNET, an Educational Software System Company
1996	52	Opened Office in Namibia, Africa
1996	52	Majestic Star Casino Opened to the Public June 11, 1996 on Temporary Vessel
1997	53	New \$50 Million Majestic Star II Vessel Opened
1997	53	Applied for License to Own/Operate a Casino in the City of Detroit
1998	54	Opened New Automotive Upfit Factory in Namibia, Africa
1999	55	Named Developer for Gary, Ind., Waterfront Development
2000	56	Purchased 175 Acres for a Major Mixed-Use Development in Gary
2001	56	Acquired Fitzgeralds Casinos in Tunica, Miss.; Black Hawk, Colo., and Downtown Las Vegas, becoming the First and Only African American to Wholly Own a National Casino Company
2005	61	Acquired Trump Indiana Casino and Hotel in Gary, Indiana
2006	62	Acquired 11-story Carson Street Office Building in Downtown Las Vegas
2006	63	Awarded the Sole License to Own/Operate a Pittsburgh Casino