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MICHAEL WARD

PRESIDENT & CEO, PROJECT MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS GROUP

ABOVE AND BEYOND

By Princess Hayes

Michael Ward is president and chief executive officer of Project Management Solutions Group, an enterprise project management firm that specializes in IT, telecommunications, business operations, supply-chain logistics, business operations, construction, healthcare and real estate.

Ward grew up in St. Louis, Missouri and attended Charles H. Sumner High School—the oldest African American high school in St. Louis. During his time there, he became a swimmer. Ward cites being an African American swimmer, a rarity in his time, as helping him to become who he is today.

“Coming from where I’m from and being able to do something that is above and beyond yourself, gave way for more opportunities and a different mindset,” says Ward.

After being told that being a professional swimmer wasn’t a career, Ward went undefeated his senior year of high school and earned a swim scholarship to Drury University. He considers this to be a defining moment for him. “From that point on, I knew that success comes from hard work versus it being given or inherited.”

Ward attended Drury University in Springfield, Missouri but went on to graduate from New York University in New York City with a degree in electrical engineering while serving as a United States Coast Guard. While taking a series of assessment tests upon entering the military, Ward discovered he had a predisposition for math and science, and was encouraged to pursue engineering. Once he entered the program, he realized that he had

a strong aptitude for it. Ward enjoyed the program and excelled very quickly. He says, “I didn’t choose my career. It basically chose me.”

After retiring from the military, Ward moved around quite a bit. He has lived in Los Angeles, Phoenix, Miami, New York, Chicago and a few other cities.

Ward expressed that because he’s in a value-added business, there was a time when it was difficult to balance his personal and professional lives. Because even when he’s away from the office, his mind is still in business mode. Over the years as the business became more established and structured—creating better stability—he has been able to achieve that balance. The base of his operation has kept him in St. Louis but he is currently looking into expanding his business to possibly Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, and Alabama.

Ward says Muhammad Ali inspires him because he stuck to his principles and commitments, which are parallel to his beliefs. He says that the most beneficial lesson that he has learned is that “hard work pays off and prayer works!”

Ward has overcome every obstacle that he has been faced with, which he said gives him a rush. “To have one of the most successful black businesses in St. Louis is not only a coup for my ego but a testimony of how God can elevate you from nothing to something.” He thanks God for all of his achievements. “To believe in something not only of yourself but greater than yourself that will get you to where you want to be”.