



## **Ernest Daurham Jr. Autobiography**

**Ernest Daurham Jr., the second child in a family of nine children, grew up in the Altgeld Gardens public housing development on the far south side of Chicago. Ernest attended Carver elementary and high school until he graduated in 1965. Between the ages of 13 to 14, he started earning money for his clothes and other personal needs by cutting the hair of his friends and other young boys in the Altgeld Community for just 25 cents a head. This practice took place in his bedroom, with a \$7.00 pair of clippers that his mother bought him, a bar of soap and a razor blade. After several years of practicing on his younger brother Chap (who owned and operated Chazap's Barber College in the same exact building that was his first manufacturing plant, and is now owned by his son Corey), Ernest became so good that he decided to go to barber college, and soon after, got a job as a part-time barber in the communities local barber shop. Ernest attended the McCoy Barber College as well as the**

Dunbar School of Cosmetology, both at the same time. He would split the hours of each day, Monday thru Wednesday, between both schools, and work in the community barber shop Thursday thru Saturday, from 1967 until he completed both courses in 1969. As a result, he now holds a barber's license, a cosmetology license, a cosmetology instructor's license, and a barber instructor's license. After completing his education, he purchased Irby's barber and beauty salon, the place where he worked in the same community where he grew up. Mr. Daurham started retailing a certain product for his customers, called the "Good Fred Oil", and created a huge market for it in his salon. When the product became so popular among his clients and the producer of this brand couldn't keep up with his demand, Mr. Daurham took the ingredients from the back label of the bottle and began to experiment with the chemicals himself. The product that Mr. Daurham made, called "Afro-Gro", and later when the Curly Perm hit the market, he changed the name to "Curly Gro", because of it's ability to moisterize the curls, and keep them maintained, worked even better because, being a stylist, he could use the product on his clients to observe how the hair reacted to it. This allowed him to add or take away different amounts of ingredients to get the perfect results that he wanted. When it wasn't convenient for his customers to come all the way back to his salon to purchase his newly formulated product that worked so well on their hair, they went to their neighborhood stores looking for the product. Their asking for his product became so intense that the buyers from Walgreens and other beauty supply stores contacted him to start carrying his product. By 1979, Mr. Daurham was so busy making product to keep up with the demand from the stores that he didn't have the time to style or cut hair anymore. By 1980 he established D'Orum Hair Products Inc., to address the unique hair care needs of the African American consumer market with which he was so familiar. By 1982, he invented a no-rod curl kit called "Chicago Curl" and made his first two million dollars by 1984. "Chicago Curl" was so unique because at that time all the other curl companies were rolling the hair to get the curl, but the "Chicago Curl" required no rollers, so it was a lot easier and faster to do. During that same time period, a competitive company came out with a similar product, and because they had been in the business at least

twenty years before Mr. Daurham, had an established advertising program, and already had distribution channels established, they virtually took over his market. By 1985, with his back against the wall, and nearly out of business, Mr. Daurham came out with another product to address the needs of the African American consumer market. This time it was "Leisure Curl", a dry non-oily relaxer look that required no plastic cap. Mr. Daurham changed the beauty industry in these two dynamic ways, neither of which may ever happen again in the beauty Industry. (#1) This product was so unique and popular, and took the market so fast, that other companies came out with copy-cat product lines, so the retail stores had to create a new category for it called the "Dry Curl Market". This was the company's flagship brand that took Mr. Daurham, his family, employee's and models to nearly every country in the world, promoting his products. (#2) Mr. Daurham also changed the way many distributors did business in those days. Because he created such a huge demand for the "Leisure Curl", he demanded the money for his product (\$250,000.00 minimum order) before the product was shipped, even though 30 to 60 days credit was the normal way of doing business in the beauty Industry, and in many cases, no minimum order. In the years of 1989 and 1990, the Leisure Curl sales skyrocketed to a little more than TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS in sales. Financial success, although welcomed, was never the only motivating factor on Mr. Daurham's path toward success. He looked back with pride on the family and community background that made him strong. Believing sincerely that he is "Blessed", Mr. Daurham used his personal and professional resources to reach back and help others. In 1991, he established the Ernest Daurham Community Foundation to support community, social, educational and employment opportunities in the African American community. In 1992 he established the Daurham Institute of Hair Technology, a FREE COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL where single mothers and others that were living under a certain income level could attend, and their tuition was paid for by the Ernest Daurham Community Foundation. In addition to the school, Mr. Daurham opened five beauty salons around the Chicago and Gary, Indiana area, and his company employed over 150 people to create job opportunities. In 2004, Mr. Daurham sold his company, and in 1997 sold his Chicago Mansion,

**"The Castle of Olympia Fields", to R&B Singer R. Kelly, and retired to Scottsdale Arizona. Twelve years later, he began traveling the country, giving seminars on the value of consumer spending, and teaching that, if some of the money that was spent annually on hair care products was redirected, the black consumer would have enough money to buy virtually anything they wanted, which is his current project called Re-Creating Black Wall Street. It involved buying from and selling to each other, just two bottles of our hair care products in a system that, through unity, allows them to eliminate poverty by receiving much of the profits that they would normally give to the stores. Another project is his SOS (Save Our Sons) Organization, whereby his company sponsors at risk children that become victims of gangs, crime, and drugs in low-income communities, donating 50% of all product sales that come from consumers that want to assist these children financially by purchasing his products. With the assistance of two of his daughters, Barbara and Claudia, and his sisters Karen, and Pamela, who are all beauty salon owners, and test all new products for him, he's developed a general market line of products to meet the needs of consumers who want curly or wavy hair, called "The Biracial Blend Multi-Texture Styling System". Daurham Corporation now addresses the hair care needs of people of all nationalities and hair textures. Guided by a family with a strong sense of values and a belief in God, Ernest Daurham Jr. committed his life to the success he has so deservingly achieved as Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of the company that bears his name**

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