



PHOTO BY ERIC LARKIN

EDGAR L. SMITH JR.

FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
WORLD PAC PAPER, LLC

THE PAPER KING

By Donald James

For Edgar L. Smith Jr., business is about paper! As founder, chairman and chief executive officer of World Pac Paper, LLC, an international distributor and marketer of high quality printing & packaging papers and packaging solutions, Smith heads one of America's fastest growing companies. The company sources paper products and handles the sales, distribution and aggregation of supply and aptly manages the complexities of that supply.

According to Smith, the paper industry in America has been around since 1690 and makes products that America needs. Unfortunately for African-Americans and other minority groups, it has not been inclusive. Yet, Smith and World Pac Paper, LLC have consistently demonstrated their technical right and ability to succeed within this highly competitive global industry.

Smith's entrepreneurial entre' into the industry was established after working in sales, marketing, and administration for four top companies in the industry: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, James Rivers Corp., Georgia-Pacific and Smurfit-Stone. "I believe that people do what they know," says Smith. "If there were more ethnic-minorities working for major paper mills and distributors perhaps there would be more minorities coming out and saying, 'I can do this for myself as an entrepreneur.' I have a long history of working for industry leading paper and packaging companies which has allowed me to gather experience and learn many aspects of the paper industry."

Under Smith's visionary leadership, World Pac Paper has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors,

including the Blue Ribbon Small Business Award (2011) from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and being named Small Business of the Year (2010) by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. In addition, the company has been included on *Black Enterprise* magazine's BE100. *Fortune* magazine and the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) recently recognized World Pac Paper as one of the America's fastest-growing inner city companies. "We are excited to be recognized as a national leader and involved with a product that is so versatile, so woven into the way we live our lives and communicate with each other, while still being natural, recyclable and sustainable," says Smith. "We have excellent people who are customer focused and have a clear energy and enthusiasm for the paper business and for satisfying our customers' needs, while also remaining sensitive to America's shared environmental concerns."

A graduate of Morehouse College, Smith, upon relocating to Cincinnati has engaged this community as an avid volunteer, serving in leadership capacities on the board of directors of many prominent civic and community non-profit organizations. He feels it is important to contribute to the vibrancy of our community and economy.

However, it is the values learned as an Eagle Scout, along with the teachings of his parents, which have propelled Smith forward to excellence, both personally and professionally. "I was taught that you have to 'be prepared' and that you must educate yourself for the future. I always consider the possibilities...I can see what something currently is, but I always ask what could it be?" says Smith.