

# Darryl Willis

## President and General Manager

### BP Angola



*“The intersection of my life in 1989 with INROADS altered the trajectory of my life.”*

“Without INROADS, I would not have had the opportunity to attend business school, to embark on a thirty-year career, to live all around the world or, ultimately, start my own company,” said Darryl Willis, president and general manager at BP Angola. Darryl remembered the crossroads between his life and INROADS in 1989, when the trajectory of his life was altered by the impact of INROADS.

Like so many youth, Darryl was rapidly headed down the wrong path. In fact, he almost failed his freshman year of high school. With failure looming, he knew he had two choices — go down the wrong road or turn his life around and find another path. “For some reason, I chose to try and make something out of my life,” he said. He went on to become president of his senior class and graduated in the top 10 percent of his class.

Later on, when he was in college, he found out about INROADS internship opportunities through re-connecting with his former high school guidance counselor. His counselor encouraged him to apply to INROADS for an opportunity to intern at Amoco as a geophysical apprentice. “What’s a geophysical apprentice,” was his initial reaction.

Darryl remembered when he received the opportunity. He completed four internships with Amoco, and the company also funded his first graduate degree — Darryl holds an undergraduate degree in chemistry and literature from Northwestern State University, a graduate degree in geology and geophysics from The University of New Orleans, and a second graduate degree in business from Stanford University. When he graduated in 1993, he went on to join Amoco full-time.

Looking back on his time with INROADS, he identified three specific reasons that made the experience life changing. The first reason: “It allowed me to be exposed to very successful people of color.” He built relationships with “bright minority students who were doing some really phenomenal things.” This helped him to be well rounded in all aspects of this life.

The second reason is that INROADS exposed him to Corporate America and mentors who “were examples of what success looked like.” He needed a vision to grow, and his mentors helped him to achieve greatness. The third reason: “[It taught] me the basics in regard to protocol.” He learned how to interact with people from the community to the boardroom, which helped him to navigate through Corporate America and grow his career immensely over time.

Darryl’s involvement with INROADS increased his confidence without sacrificing his humility. The dream that INROADS founding father Frank Carr created, Darryl emulates to this day. “INROADS was simply a life-changing experience.”