

T H E B L A C K

# PERSPECTIVE

## Breaking Through The *Grass* Ceiling

Rose Harper  
Providing  
Access To  
Success On  
The Links

Also Inside:



The Downside of  
African-American  
Success



The Ex-Con  
Employment  
Agency



The Richest  
African-Americans  
You Never Heard Of

# T H E B L A C K PERSPECTIVE

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#### Breaking Through The Grass Ceiling

Recognizing the intrinsic value of golf to corporate life and doing business, Rose Harper built a business around demystifying the game for women and people of color so they can gain access to opportunities they might otherwise have missed.

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##### You Knew It Was Too Good To Be True

We've got a Black president, so racism is over right? With more African Americans finding success, people are starting to think those who don't are really just victims of their own failings. Institutionalized attitudes have nothing to do with it—or do they?

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##### Black, Rich And Not Famous

Everybody knows Beyonce, Denzel, LeBron, and Oprah; but there's an entire universe of exceptionally wealthy African Americans out there you've never heard of. In other words, you don't have to be famous to be rich and Black—it just seems that way.

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##### A Little Help From A Friendly Swiss Bank

Credit Suisse has launched a new initiative to help African Americans build wealth. Basically, a course in how to get rich—while really trying—the bank is providing mentors and capital to help more people get onto page 17.

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# Letters *from* the Editor




T H E B L A C K  
**PERSPECTIVE**


## Breaking Through The *Grass* Ceiling

Rose Harper Providing Access To Success On The Links

**Also Inside:**



**The Downside of African-American Success**



**The Ex-Con Employment Agency**



**The Richest African-Americans You Never Heard Of**

## Do You Live To Work—Or Work To Live?

Our list of the richest African Americans you've never heard of is stacked with successful people who made considerable fortunes from having good ideas that coincided with their skill sets and executing them well.

Whether parlaying a humble plastering business into building airports and stadiums, or realizing companies would have an easier time staffing if they were being served by an organization specializing in that activity, each person saw an opportunity to do what they knew how to do on a larger scale and made the most of it.

However, this is only half of what got them there.

If you're reading this in contemplation of your next career move, there's something else equally important you can take away from their experiences. Assessing your skills to determine what you should do is important, sure. It is equally important to take some time to assess what you really enjoy doing too.

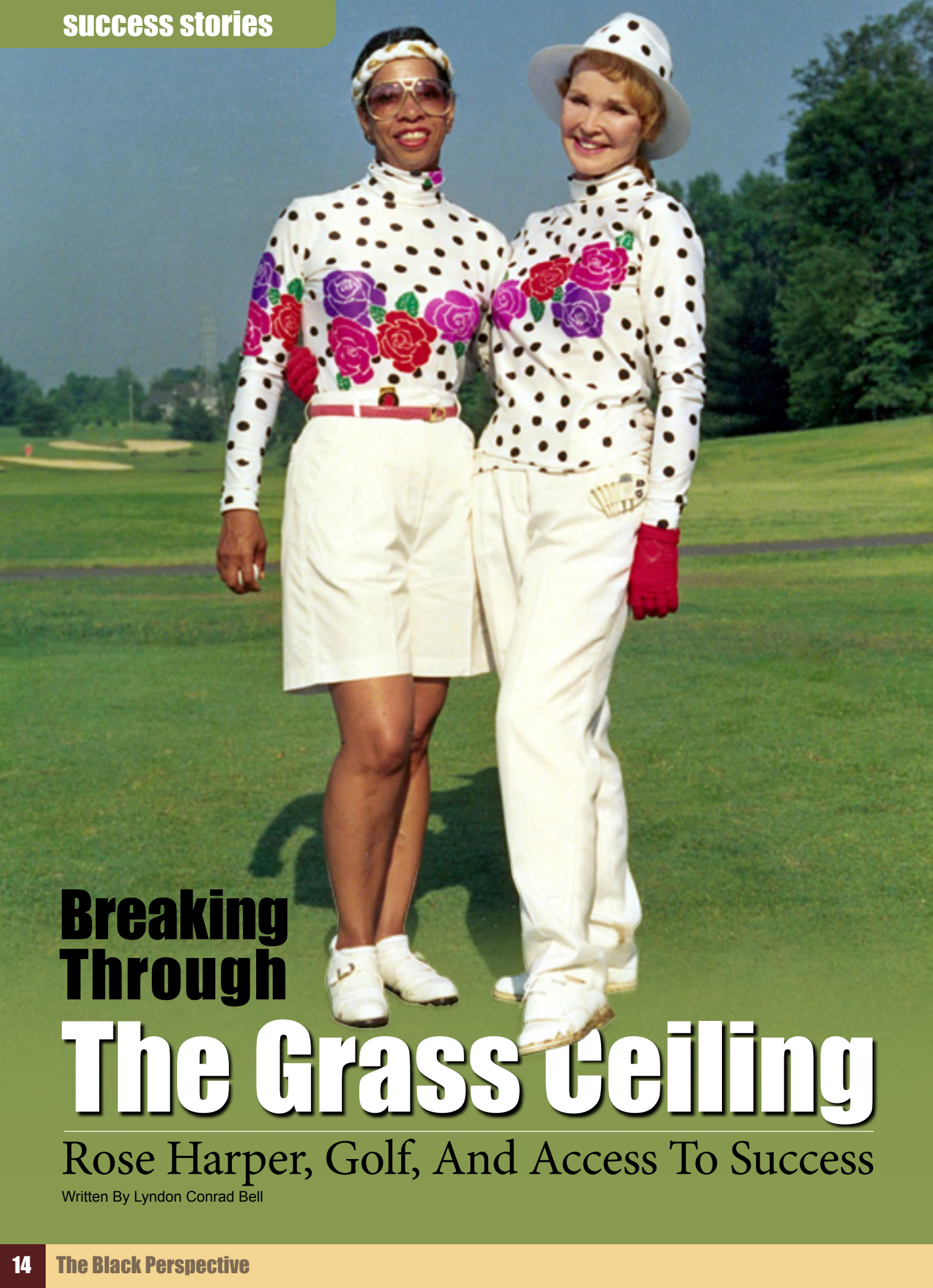
Consider the subject of our cover story.

An avid golfer, Rose Harper recognized how instrumental golf is to doing business at a certain level. She also saw women and people of color missing out on business and advancement opportunities because they had little interest in the game. So Harper made it her life's

work to demystify golf to help them get more into it. While doing what she loved, Harper found a business opportunity she could get excited about and built her career upon putting it into practice.

Situations like this are all around you all the time. The key is paying attention to what you love to do and figuring out how to make it work for you—instead of working so you can do it. Whether you're starting a company or seeking employment; if you do what you love, you'll never work another day in your life, the days of your life will work for you.

-Lyndon Conrad Bell  
Editor  
*The Black Perspective*



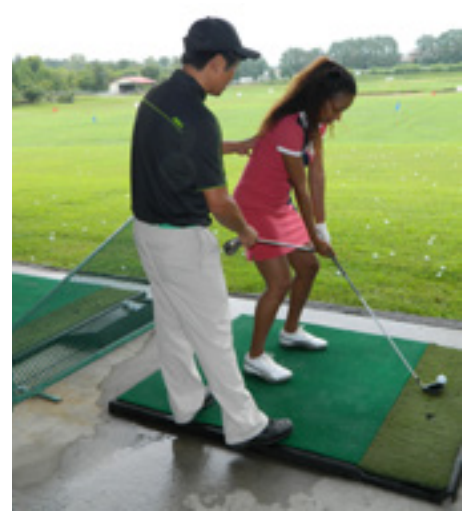
**Breaking  
Through**

# The Grass Ceiling

Rose Harper, Golf, And Access To Success

Written By Lyndon Conrad Bell





### GOLF IS THE GAME OF BIG BUSINESS.

Universally recognized as one of the most powerful tools for networking and deal making in the modern business world, fully 90 percent of Fortune 500 executives play golf. As a business tool, the game of golf, with its social protocols, can be an important door opener and bridge builder for business development, politics, and international relations.

This is why Rose Harper is making a dedicated effort to see more women and people of color take up the game to avail themselves of its many lucrative benefits. One of the founders of the PGA Tour Wives Association, the initiator of the *Golf Digest* Minority Golf Summit, the first person of color to run a professional 18-hole course for the U.S. Department of The Interior, and the first African-American woman to manage professional golfers, Harper has been immersed in the world of golf since her teens.

Exceptionally energetic, and one of the most enthusiastic people you'll ever meet, Harper smiles wistfully when asked to recall why she started playing golf in the first place. Just as it is for her today, taking up golf was all about inclusiveness.

"I learned to play golf my last year in high school," Harper says. "All of the guys at the company where I worked at the time played, and I didn't want to be left out. But honestly, I had no idea golf would wind up taking me all the way around the world."

Indeed, golf has taken Harper all over the globe; her involvement with the game knows no national boundaries. After the fall of apartheid in South Africa, Harper was instrumental in taking the first black professional golfers to South Africa to participate in what had been the all-white South African PGA Tournament.

"It was one of the proudest moments of my career," Harper says. "For the first time in the history of the country, black and white golfers participated in the South African PGA. It was also the first time black and white fans entered the same gates at the tournament, used the same restrooms, and sat in the same bleachers."

Recognizing golf is more than just a game, Harper observed women and people of color who don't golf aren't benefitting from the business opportunities routinely encountered by the

people who do. According to statistics compiled by *Barron's* magazine, one quarter of the 25 million golfers in the United States are top management executives. Further, a full 80 percent of them agree the game is an important business development tool. And yet, women and minorities aren't taking full advantage of the game.

To address this void in the corporate domain, where executive-level women and people of color are under-recognized, under-celebrated, and under-promoted, she founded The Grass Ceiling to get these traditionally under-represented individuals out on the golf courses where deals are made. Leveraging her 30 years of experience in the sports management and special events industry, Harper's aim is to add value these people's lives and their careers.

Ultimately, The Grass Ceiling is a business empowerment firm using the game of golf as a platform to help level the playing field for women and people of color in the business world. With the company, Harper's ultimate goal is to demystify golf for female and other minority executives worldwide. Through a series of workshops and lectures, she demonstrates how the game is used to do business, as well as engender high-powered human relations.

She also consults with corporations to help decision makers see how the game can help diversify their talent pools. Harper says it's all about helping people think outside of the cubicle when it comes to developing new leaders, particularly as it pertains to diversity and inclusiveness initiatives.

"Many people have yet to realize golf is an extremely effective leadership development tool, as well as a diversity and inclusion recruiting tool. So many corporations talk about diversity and inclusion without being truly effective at it. We show our clients how this non-traditional approach can work for them."

Harper's new book, *Art of the Deal: Golf—Access To Success* (see page 26 of this issue) outlines the foundational concepts of the game of golf, dispels common myths about barriers to success on the course, presents accepted norms and etiquette of the game, and makes the undeniable connection between experience on the green and success in the boardroom. For more details about the book, and The Grass Ceiling's services, visit [TheGrassCeiling.com](http://TheGrassCeiling.com) **BP**