

## **J.C. Watts Companies**

### **J.C. Watts, Jr.**

Founder and Chairman



J.C. Watts is the chairman of the J.C. Watts Companies, a multi-industry holding company headquartered in Washington, DC, with operations in Texas, Oklahoma, and South Korea.

As chairman, J.C. provides strategic focus and program leadership to the firm's business engagements, alliances and initiatives. J.C. has built a diverse business organization that includes the first African-American owned John Deere dealerships in America; CLS Group, a project management firm with construction and engineering operations; Oak Crest Capital, a private equity firm; and Watts Consulting Group (WCG), a public affairs consulting company.

As chairman of WCG, J.C. works with clients to implement business development, communications and public affairs strategies. He advises or serves as a corporate director for several major companies, including John Deere, Wells Fargo, NASCAR, Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Clear Channel Communications, Dillard's Department Stores, and Terex Corporation. In addition, WCG has successfully worked on major civil rights issues at the federal and state level, including efforts to protect affirmative action, ensure voting rights, and alleviate global poverty and HIV/AIDS in Africa and elsewhere. He is an analyst for CNN and a frequent guest on national and international news shows and radio shows and has been widely quoted in major newspaper articles, both in the United States and around the world. He also writes a twice monthly column for more than a dozen newspapers.

J.C. has continued his public service by leading a U.S. delegation to Vienna, Austria, at the request of President Bush and Secretary of State Powell, to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Conference on Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia. He joined President Bush on his historic trip to Africa. He co-founded and co-chairs the Coalition for AIDS Relief in Africa and serves on the board of the Corporate Council on Africa. He serves on the boards of the Boy Scouts of America and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He also created the J.C. and Frankie Watts Foundation to focus on urban renewal and other charitable initiatives.

J.C. was elected to the U.S. Congress from the fourth district of Oklahoma in 1994. In 1998, he was elected by his peers to serve as chairman of the Republican Conference, the fourth-ranking leadership position in the majority party in the U.S. House of Representatives, and a position once held by Dick Cheney, Jack Kemp and Gerald Ford. In this capacity, J.C. provided daily counsel to the Speaker of the House, and participated in bi-weekly meetings with the President of the United States.

As a Member of Congress representing the fourth district of Oklahoma, J.C. served for eight years on the House Armed Services Committee. He authored legislation to create, and then he later served on, the House Select Committee on Homeland Security. He also served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, as well as the House Banking Committee. He led two congressional trade missions to Africa. He co-authored the American Community Renewal and New Markets Act, which President Clinton signed into law in 2000. He was the author of President Bush's faith based initiative, the Community Solutions Act of 2001. He also developed legislation with Congressman

John Lewis to establish a Smithsonian museum of African American history.

J.C. was born on November 18, 1957 in Eufaula, Oklahoma. He graduated from Eufaula High School in 1976 and attended the University of Oklahoma until his graduation in 1981 with a B.A. in journalism. While at the University of Oklahoma, Watts was quarterback for the Sooners, leading them to two consecutive Big Eight Championships and Orange Bowl victories. He was voted the Most Valuable Player in the 1980 and 1981 Orange Bowls. From 1981 to 1986, he started for Ottawa and Toronto in the Canadian Football League and was voted the Most Valuable Player of the Grey Cup, the CFL's Super Bowl, his rookie season.

After returning to Oklahoma, Watts served as a youth minister at Sunnyside Baptist Church in Del City, Oklahoma from January 1987 until December 1994, when he then became associate pastor. In 1990 he was elected to the Oklahoma State Corporation Commission and became chairman before running for Congress in 1994.