

## My Inspiration

My Uncle, Omar Karim is more than just my relative. He is a living testament to the power of ambition and perseverance. As a young African-American in a society that often told him his dreams were out of reach, he defied the odds started Banneker Ventures, which has become one of the top African American owned construction and real estate development companies in the Metropolitan Washington DC area. Uncle Omar named his company after Benjamin Banneker who was an engineer, surveyor and astronomer who developed the plans for what is now known as Washington, D.C. Witnessing his journey firsthand has ignited a spark of entrepreneurship within me, one that continues to burn bright.

From age six or seven, I was drawn to my uncle's world of drawings and hard hats. Moving to Maryland in 2016 allowed me to witness his passion firsthand. I remember when Uncle Omar would take me to his office and to job sites, where I'd be mesmerized by the machines and material and the way they transformed into magnificent structures. But it wasn't just the physical act of building that captivated me; it was the passion in his eyes and the pride in his voice as he spoke about his company. He wasn't just renovating offices and building structures; he was building his legacy, creating opportunities for himself and others, and building a better world.

As the years went on, I saw the challenges my uncle faced – the skepticism from potential clients, the late nights spent poring over contracts, and the constant battle against the biases in the world. Yet, he persevered, treating each obstacle as a steppingstone. His determination was fueled by a deep-seated belief in his own potential and the responsibility he felt towards his community.

Uncle Omar's unwavering spirit rubbed off on me. In him, I see the courage to chase my own dreams, the resilience to overcome hurdles, and the resourcefulness to navigate challenging landscapes. He taught me the value of hard work, the importance of networking, and the power of believing in myself, even when doubt surrounds me.

As I am moving toward graduating High School and going out into the real world, I draw strength from my uncle's example. He has shown me that success isn't a given; it's a choice, a daily commitment to excel and an unwavering belief in the impossible. He doesn't just inspire me; he empowers me, equipping me with the tools and confidence to carve my own path.

My journey as an entrepreneur will undoubtedly have its own set of challenges, but I will face them with the same grit and determination that I witnessed in my Uncle Omar. With every milestone achieved, every obstacle overcome, I will honor his legacy, not just by building my own dreams, but by inspiring others to chase theirs, proving that anything is possible with a little courage, a lot of hard work, and an unwavering belief in the power of one's own potential.