

Where Are They Now? Alumni Spotlight on O'Neal Sims



*O'Neal Sims,
Junior Achievement Alumnus*

Growing up on Chicago's South Side, O'Neal Sims could never have imagined the journey Junior Achievement (JA) would set in motion for him. Sims, a first-generation college student, credits JA with broadening his horizons and helping him see beyond the limitations of his immediate environment.

Throughout his sophomore through senior years at Englewood High School, JA was instrumental in preparing Sims and his peers for academic competitions. One of his proudest moments was when his team, often considered underdogs, placed second in the district—a feat akin to winning the Super Bowl, as Sims recalls. The excitement and pride of that victory remain a cornerstone of his JA experience.

But JA's impact didn't end there. Sims received the Cornell Henry Crown Foundation Scholarship, a \$20,000 award that supported him through Purdue University. This opportunity, he says, was transformative, providing him with the resources and confidence to excel.

Today, Sims serves as Director of Quality for Snap-on Tools' Tools Division, overseeing operations at four manufacturing plants and managing a portfolio of over 85,000 products distributed in more than 130 countries. His career is a testament to the doors that JA opened for him.

Now based in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Sims is eager to give back. He sees JA's programs, such as the JA Career Center, as invaluable tools for exposing young people to career possibilities they might never have considered. "JA shows kids they can be CEOs, managers, or innovators—it's all about expanding their world and potential," he says.

O'Neal Sims exemplifies how JA inspires and equips young people for success, and his story underscores the enduring power of community investment in future generations.