



**Metropolitan Water  
Reclamation District  
of Greater Chicago**



# 2022 MWRD AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

## Kenneth Frazier

**Kenneth Frazier, age 67, is a successful businessman and is the current executive chairman and former CEO of Merck pharmaceutical company. He is the first African American leader of a pharmaceutical company.**

Frazier came from humble beginnings, supporting his undergraduate college education by raising and selling tadpoles and newts. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Pennsylvania State University and graduated with a J.D. from Harvard Law School in 1978.

Frazier practiced law for several years, during which time he took four summer sabbaticals to teach trial advocacy in South Africa.

Frazier joined Merck in 1992 as general counsel for its public affairs division, with later promotions to executive vice president of Merck in 2006, and president of Merck in 2010. He was named CEO in 2011.

Frazier has passion for working on the issues of equity and justice, being most passionate about education. He is the co-founder and co-Chair of the Executive Committee of OneTen, an organization with the mission to hire, promote and advance one million Black individuals who do not have a four-year degree into family-sustaining careers over the next 10 years. He is quoted as stating, "The thing I care about most is opportunity."

In August 2020, Frazier and his wife donated \$5 million to Jefferson Health, a healthcare system in Northeast Philadelphia and Lower Bucks County Pennsylvania to work with Temple University on a new stroke prevention initiative targeting African American communities.

