

Why the Name Wanda James is an Important One in the Cannabis Space

I love being the youngest African American to own a dispensary, but I wouldn't be able to say that if it weren't for the many talented and intelligent brothers and sisters who paved the way for me—both in the cannabis industry and in general.

Colorado has a long history with cannabis and is considered one of the most forward-thinking states in this regard. In 1975 the state decriminalized weed and by 2000 it was legal for medicinal use. In 2009, [Wanda James](#) and her husband Scott Durrah made history when they opened one of the first dispensaries in Colorado, becoming the first African Americans to own a dispensary, grow facility and manufacturer of cannabis edibles in the United States.

In addition to founding [Simply Pure](#), in Denver, James is a former lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, was campaign manager for two successful congressional runs in Colorado, and she served under former President Barack Obama on the National Finance Committee.

It was during her tenure with President Obama that James was appointed to work on Amendment 64, which ended cannabis prohibition in Colorado, thus paving the way to legalizing recreational cannabis in 2012.