

Tech 10

## The BBJ's Tech 10: Robert L. Wallace

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KAITLIN NEWMAN

**Robert L. Wallace is the CEO of BITHGROUP Technologies, Inc.**

**Age:** 59

**Education:** Bachelor's from University of Pennsylvania; Master's from Dartmouth College

**Why he got involved in technology:**

“When I was a kid, I started realizing that what is going to make a difference in the quality of life in society is the combination of entrepreneurship and technology. I’ve always felt that those two together can change the world.”

[Robert Wallace](#) always knew there would come a time to shine.

But it wasn’t immediately after the years he spent researching solar energy as a college student in the 1970s.

“Typically there’s always a lag between the technology movement and consumer or market acceptance,” said Wallace, founder and CEO of Baltimore’s BITHGROUP Technologies, who said he long thought renewable energy would resurface.

“Being an engineer, I was able to make a living in other areas of technology,” he said. “But I always felt that renewable energy would get traction at some point in the future.”

It did around 2008 or 2009, he said. Wallace now leads some high-profile energy projects across the country, including a massive 10-megawatt solar plant in Howard County.



An IT company is now one of three under the BITHGROUP umbrella, along with executive coaching company EntreTeach Learning Systems and Bithenergy, focused largely on solar and wind power. Battery storage and micro-grid engineering are getting much of Wallace's current attention and excitement.

"We're talking to mayors now in the state of Mississippi," he said. "And part of our plan for them is to help them build a micro-grid for their downtowns so that their towns could operate independently from the utility companies."

Wallace has written books about entrepreneurship, some geared toward women and minorities, who he said are seeing improved opportunity and participation in the tech sector. But more change is needed particularly when it comes to access to capital, he said.

That's a challenge for the Baltimore tech market in general.

"I was born and raised in Baltimore. I'm a fan of the city," Wallace said. "But the reality is that we have a perception issue."

Still, he moved BITHGROUP's headquarters from Columbia to downtown Baltimore.

"Many folks said I was crazy when I did that. But I saw the future," Wallace said. "Baltimore is well-positioned in terms of its quality of life and cost of living. You've got a concentration of people, and potential clients. I'm optimistic about the future."