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July/August 2006 **Business Journal** 8th Edition

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SPECIAL PEOPLE **DOING** SPECIAL THINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY



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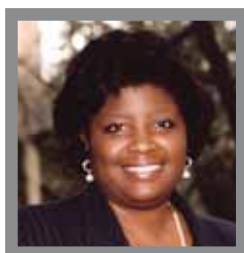
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: D'Artagnan Bebel, Samuel Curtis, Sam Choice, MR. D-MARS, Ron Reynolds and Thad Moore



Carla Lane
Diverse Staff, Inc



Dr. Kevin Smith
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Carmen R. Watkins
KMJQ Majic 102



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Publisher's Message
Keith J. Davis, Sr.

Any successful business person can tell you, success is much sweeter when you give back to the community. That means giving time, money, services, or by just doing something special.

In this issue we wanted to focus on those special people who are doing special things in our community.

When we sat down to decide who to include in this edition, I'm amazed by the choices we had. There were so many people doing special things in the community. It was hard to narrow it down. But we managed to do just that, finding some of the hardest working business people in town.

With plates that are often overflowing, the individuals featured would understandably have little time to work in the community. Yet, they make time. Their commitment comes naturally.

As you read about them in our profile section we ask that you also take time to support their endeavors, patronize their businesses. They are a blessing to our community. Let's be a blessing to them as well.

I am committed to working for the community. It was wonderful to see others who share my passion. But you don't have to be a successful business person to do special things in the community. You can be an aspiring business owner, or just an individual with a desire to give back. That in itself can make you special, too.



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MR. D-MARS

Tip of the Month

*Have you discovered your special purpose?
Anyone can be a special person....all it takes is to do something special*

*Discover your God-given purpose
Special people come from all walks of life....discover what makes you special*

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SPECIAL PEOPLE DOING

SPECIAL THINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY



D'Artagnan Bebel

For a man with as much power as D'Artagnan Bebel, you might think he has little time for the community. You couldn't be more wrong. Bebel is Vice President, General Manager of Fox 26 KRIV-TV and UPN 20 KTXH-TV, a position he has held since November 2001.

Running two major stations can be extremely time consuming, but Bebel still finds a way to give back to the community. He serves on several Boards, some of which include: 2006 Board Chairman, Better Business Bureau of Houston, Zina Garrison's All-Court Tennis Academy, The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, Minority Media & Telecommunications Council Braintrust, American Women In Radio & Television Advisory Board, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, and the Houston Area Urban League. He and his wife, Angela served as National Co-Chairs for the American Tennis Association 87th National Championships in 2004.

Bebel is well known and respected in the Houston community, as he is in high demand as a keynote speaker for various galas and community events, as well as a motivational speaker for colleges and schools.

Bebel is the recipient of numerous awards including: several Certificates of U.S. Congressional Recognition for Community Service, NAACP-Drum Major For Justice Award, City Of Houston Proclamation-"D'Artagnan Bebel Day," Alpha Kappa Alpha-Celebration of Soaring Achievement Award. Prior to coming to Houston, Bebel was also Vice-President, General Manager at Fox 13 WHBQ-TV in Memphis, Tennessee for two years. Bebel has been in broadcasting for over 20 years serving in a variety of sales and sales management positions for companies including Fox, CBS and The Dispatch Group.

He and his wife have been married for 20 years and are the proud parents of four: D'Artagnan II, age 16, Alysia, age 15 and twins Julian and Kalina, age 8. Bebel served as coach for his older son's USTA Jr. Team Tennis, 14 & Under Division when they won the 2002 Texas State Championship.

He spends the rest of his time shuttling his daughter, Alysia, to her various modeling jobs, agent meetings and TV/film auditions. He also makes time to go for bike rides to the park and the "ice cream store" with the twins. He and his family reside in The Woodlands, Texas and also enjoy travel, boating and the performing arts.



Samuel Curtis

"Nothing beats a failure but a try." That's the motto of Samuel Curtis, President and Founder of Team Orthotics & Prosthetics Inc.

Curtis is a world class Orthotist, Prosthetist, & Engineer who brings over 15 years of Excellence to Team Orthotics & Prosthetics Inc. He started Team O & P Inc in 2000 with just two employees and incorporated in March of 2002, which began a long term tenure in the health care industry.

Curtis says the most fulfilling part of his job is working with people and the personal gratification of seeing people get back to a normal life after the emotional distress they are in when he first meets them coping with their physical limb loss.

"I believe I am special knowing that I have helped a person regain a little confidence in themselves after experiencing something so traumatic as losing a part of their body. It lets me know that I and what I do is a blessing from God," states Curtis. "There aren't very many people, especially African-Americans, in prosthetics, and personally the fulfillment I receive from helping someone accomplish something that we all take for granted, like walking, driving, running, and writing is indescribable." Curtis says he got into the field because of his father.

"My inspiration came from my father. He was in the military and during war he would see people lose their body parts. After returning home from war, my father decided to learn about prosthetics and start his own practice. Growing up observing my father, I gain interest also. It wasn't until I was in a car accident and confronted with the possibility having my leg amputated that I decided to pursue a career in prosthetics. When my father passed away, I decided to start my own practice in prosthetics," Curtis says.

His accomplishments are only overshadowed by his lifelong commitment and dedication to his patients' lifestyle. To make sure the community is informed he conducts workshops, outreach programs, in-services for community clinics, doctors, nurses, physical therapist, home health agencies and dialysis centers. Curtis believes that

community outreach is a key component of their growth strategy. Most importantly, he believes giving back to the community is a viable asset.

He attended Albany State University where he sought a dual-degree in biology and mathematics. During his college years, he was employed as an orthotic and prosthetic engineer by his father, Samuel Curtis II and various companies at locations ranging from Georgia, Florida, and Texas. Such diversified positions, clinical and technical, contributed towards his balanced training and education in the industry.

Curtis has grown his company from the traditional "Mom & Pop" company, once ridiculed for its lack of product lines, to being one of the premier orthopedic companies of its kind in the state of Texas.



Sam Choice

Sam Choice is a woman on the move. A native of Dallas, Choice began her career in radio as an intern working in Programming/Promotions.

In September of 2000, Choice's hard work, churning, and striking personality advanced her even further when she became Executive Producer for The Tom Joyner Morning Show. Following the success of the morning show, in June of 2001, Choice quickly advanced another step when she was promoted to Music Director.

But the biggest accomplishment would come three years later, when Choice was named Program Director of Radio One's powerhouse KMQJ-Majic 102.1, making her the youngest female Program Director nationally.

Choice says she chose to go into the music field because she has always loved music and enjoys talking to and helping people.

"I love music and enjoy talking to people, plus, my mom would always say your mouth is going to do one or two things for you. 1.) Take you where you're going or 2.) Keep you in trouble. And I must say, so far I haven't got into too much trouble. Well, except for that one time she slapped me in my mouth for smart-mouthing her. My tooth eventually grew back...just kidding," said Choice.

What she doesn't kid about is her commitment to the community.

"I stay committed to the community, because I feel it's part of my job as Program Director to inform and involve, not only for the community, but my staff as well. It is very necessary to be involved with the community. Without the community we would not be who we are...they make us who we are when it comes to being number one. Without the community, we would not be the number one station, and for their support we are very thankful," she said.

Choice believes that radio is a way to keep the community informed and involved by utilizing several elements like popping open the mic, a live broadcast, breaking news

segments, or programs like Sunday Morning Live with Carmen Watkins.

"KMQJ has been in the Houston market for nearly 30 years and we owe that to the community for being so supportive over the years and we also owe it to ourselves. As the leading community station, we must continue to inform the community, give back to the community, and stay involved with the community. What makes me and what I do special is my ability to lead KMQJ in it's continuous success and community involvement. Majic 102.1 is a legendary radio station. It has been around for 29 1/2 years and it is a privilege and honor to be able to program such a powerhouse," says Choice.

As Program Director, Choice oversees on-air personalities, executes the operation of a national music scheduling system, fosters team work, generates ratings, and works closely with the KMQJ Sales department, among other duties. She also decides what will and won't go on the radio, and offers words of wisdom to business owners trying to get coverage.

"For business people hoping to get radio coverage, it's imperative that you reach out to the radio station and if we don't call or email you back immediately, don't give up. We are very busy and may not be able to reach out to everyone as fast as they would like us too. Also, make sure whatever it is you are presenting to the radio station is well thought out and put together. This will help make the process for your request move faster," she said.

She believes the most fulfilling part of her job is being able to assist someone who has the desire to follow in her footsteps and her joy comes from giving back.

"I would personally like to take time out and give a BIG THANK YOU to the City of Houston and it's surrounding areas for making us their number one station and supporting KMQJ over the years. We look forward to many, many more," she said.



Ron Reynolds

Ron Reynolds is no stranger to hard work and doing his part for the community. As president of the Missouri City/Fort Bend Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he stays busy working for the community. And as if that wasn't enough, his day job as an attorney is even more demanding.

But Reynolds doesn't complain, because he feels like he's making a difference in the community.

"I enjoy helping people, fighting for those who usually don't have the means, or are from lower socio economic levels. I enjoy working for the little person," states Reynolds.

He is able to do just that through his career as a partner in the law firm of Brown, Brown & Reynolds, P.C. He has the distinction of being one of the youngest Judges in the State of Texas when Mayor Lee P. Brown appointed him Associate Municipal Judge for the City of Houston. Reynolds has also been an Adjunct Professor at Texas Southern University.

Reynolds prides himself on the work he does through the NAACP. He says his biggest challenge is educating people about the needs of the NAACP.

"They think we're free, but really there is still so much covert discrimination. Even in 2006, we need the NAACP because of that covert discrimination. Look at the recent elections. And we continue to fight for our people by staying at the forefront of voting rights, economic empowerment, and homeownership. There are so many things we still have to fight for that affect our community day to day," says Reynolds.

His efforts have not gone unnoticed. He has received numerous awards for his outstanding community service, including the African-American Pinnacle Award, NAACP ALEX award for Legal Excellence, Drum Major for Justice Award, YMCA Minority Achievement Award, EEOC Civil Rights Award, and Who's Who in Law.

Oftentimes, when you hear about special people doing special things, you automatically think of clergy, educators, or people who work in the social services field.

Rarely, do you think of business people. After all, successful business owners and executives are on the move 24-7. So they have no time to do special things in the community, right?

Wrong – at least if you’re talking about the people featured here. These individuals come from all areas of business. All of them experience success in some shape, form or fashion in their careers. But that doesn’t stop them from giving back...from trying to be an asset to their community...from trying to do special things.



Thad Moore

Armed with an entrepreneurial spirit, descending from a family tree of talented carpenters and roofing contractors, and a fascination with quality-based homes, Thad Moore eagerly chose to enter the field of construction as a high-end luxury custom home builder.

So in 1997, he and business partner Gary Duncan founded Savoy Custom Homes. Since its inception, Moore’s company has delivered a fine quality of workmanship in the building of elite custom homes to their invaluable customers in the Houston and surrounding areas.

It has grown into one of the most respected luxury custom construction companies in the greater Houston area.

Moore believes this is due in great part to the relationships he has built with his clients. He finds that the most fulfilling part about his job is the profound impact that he has in raising the standards of client relationships and setting new innovative trends within the upscale housing market.

“I am dedicated to my clients and passionate about the quality of my projects,” Moore said. Moore prides himself and his company on working with the client from beginning to end. They ask questions, listen to the needs and desires of the client, giving much consideration to the client’s role in customizing their new home. Customer’s complete satisfaction is the goal of the company. It is this goal that has catapulted the success of the company.

“Client referral is our greatest declaration; we rely on word of mouth, printed media and advertisements to introduce ourselves to the community,” states Moore.

Moore stays committed to the community because the community is the foundation from which the company was built. Moore says, “My business is family-oriented, therefore all that I am and all that I do is based on the people of this outstanding society.”

www.savoycustomhomes.com



Carla Lane

If you’re looking to meet your staffing needs, you need look no further than DiverseStaff.

“The old adage, “If you give a man a fish he will eat for a day. If you teach a man to fish he will eat for a lifetime. If you teach a child to fish he may feed the world.”

Providing employment and training for individuals allows us to provide a means to impact lives. The power to earn a living allows them to support their families. We are a part of that process. I enjoy being able to create opportunities where there were none,” says DiverseStaff president Carla Lane.

The company prides itself on being responsible full-fledged partners; helping to cut cost without cutting corners and working to raise productivity with a minimum of staff and maximum flexibility. Their employee pool includes clerical, accounting, professional, technical, and light industrial, warehouse and other specialized personnel.

They place highly qualified personnel to handle specific assignments on a contract basis. From administrative support, and accounting, to IT and project management, Lane says they offer Diverse solutions to all of your staffing needs.

“We help our clients meet their employment challenges by finding qualified personnel with specialized skills and proven abilities. DiverseStaff ensures the best match between its clients and applicants for contract or permanent placements in technical, management or administrative positions, with recruitment and screening techniques designed to find to the best match for the desired skill set.”

Lane says people hear diversity and automatically think race. She hopes to get business people to see it goes deeper than that.

“Diversity in the workforce has become a tag line for a lot of organizations, however diversity goes beyond races. I love being in a position to bring not only diversity of race or ethnicity but diversity of thought and experience to our clients. We are in a position to bring our clients a workforce that looks like our

global community. I love that,” she said.

With the changing nature of today’s workforce, many firms are moving to payroll and human resource outsourcing. DiverseStaff will handle the necessary paperwork, make the contractual arrangements, and maintain the payroll, providing a One-Stop Solution to all your staffing needs.

She encourages business people to always put the customer first.

“The most important thing in business is the people. Surround yourself with people who are committed to your dreams and treat the people around you like you want to be treated. Run your business with your customer in mind, if you offer a good or service that benefits your customer, the bottom line will fall in place.”

And Lane says no matter how successful you may be, you must always give back.

“By staying involved in our community, we ensure that we are offering the right solutions to current questions. If we are responsible business people we must give back to a community that has given so much to us,” she said.



Dr. Kevin Smith

Dr. Kevin Smith has helped boost the self-esteem of many people in the Houston area. As a leading facial plastic surgeon, he helps people deal with areas they deem problematic.

Dr. Smith is the medical director of the Smith Cosmetic Surgery Center. It’s a job that keeps him busy around the clock. Still, he finds time to stay involved in the community by donating his services as mentor for college and medical students.

He is active in various organizations including the United Negro College Fund, The Houston Medical Forum, The Harris County Medical Society and UT-Houston Health Science Center Development Board. He was appointed by Governor George Bush to serve on the District One Review Committee of the Texas Board of Medical Examiners.

Dr. Smith says he chose the field of plastic surgery because he was a frustrated artist who was torn between architecture and medicine.

“My personality is one that is very precise in assessing symmetry and being able to attempt to correct it fulfills that internal desire of my personality. As a kid I enjoyed building model cars and painting them to their exact specifications. This along with sports, developed good eye-hand coordination, which is important for a surgeon. I love the fact that I can diagnose a problem and offer a solution. The field of plastic surgery is forever changing. My practice has evolved over the years where I can now perform most procedures (facelifts, eyelid surgery, liposuction) with local anesthesia only,” states Smith.

“This is safer and easier on the appropriate candidate because it avoids the need for IV sedation or general anesthesia which can take days to recover from. It is neat to be performing surgery while talking to the patient. This was unheard of in the recent past.”

Dr. Smith says the most fulfilling part of his job is being able to help people who are hampered by self-esteem issues that stem from a body part that is less than ideal. It is very gratifying to be able to

assist them in living their best life without worrying about a physical problem, he says.

“I love the variety of people that I encounter. I educate them on their options and never try to simply sell a procedure to them. My desire is to treat them as though they are one of my family members,” says Smith. “I tease my patients about being a recipient of the latest fashion craze a “Smitty”, a personalized facial plastic surgery procedure designed especially for them, custom made and hand sewn. They get a kick out of that. It’s all about enjoying the work, the people and the results.” Smith says aspiring doctors must truly want to be a doctor.

“They must have the desire deep in their heart. The sacrifice is too great and the journey is too long not to have a passion for it. Also doctors are under a constant barrage with increasing malpractice premiums, decreasing reimbursements from insurance companies that make it harder to make a living. I would advise anyone that is considering medicine to also get some education in business. You have to be a savvy business person in order to survive in today’s healthcare industry,” quotes Smith.

Even though his field is medicine, Dr. Smith says all fields can learn from what he does.

“Studies have shown that the more symmetric your face the more beautiful you are perceived to be. Beautiful people are perceived to be more outgoing, intelligent, have more friends. With that in mind it is important to put your best face forward when applying for a job or competing in the work place (especially sales where person to person contact and first impressions are critical to your success).

Of course that is only the outward appearance that may get you in the door. After that, you must have substance and charisma that allows you to excel and affirm the initial impression, he said.



Carmen R. Watkins

Carmen Watkins can be seen and heard across the City of Houston on KMJQ, Majic 102. But Carmen’s commitment to the community extends far past the airwaves.

She also serves as Senior Vice President for the Houston Area Urban League, and is currently responsible for program development and management at the League. As a champion for social service reform and creating new opportunities for those in need, Carmen continues to develop and nurture innovative programming that meets the needs of the community.

Carmen has always done her part in serving the community. Some of her past and present involvements include United Way young Leaders and Allocations Committee, the National Gathering for Social Enterprise, Coordinator - Houston Coalition for Black Civic Participation, Voter Registration Coordinator - Houston Hip Hop Summit, Texas Coordinator - Unity ‘04, HHS Technology Advisory Committee, Youth Build Advisory Committee, National Urban League - Health Advisory Committee, Houston Human Resource Management Association, American Society of Training and Development, Senior Fellow and Board Member-American Leadership Forum and many more.

Carmen is also host of Majic 102.1’s, number one rated, Sunday Morning Live, serves as News and Public Affairs Director, local news announcer for the Tom Joyner Morning Show and, news announcer for KNWS, Channel 51. Carmen holds an Economics degree from Oberlin College and attended the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Rice University Center for Managers, the Texaco Management Institute and a host of professional trainings, seminars and continuing education courses.

Her career in public and corporate service includes, numerous political campaigns, Enron Corp., the U.S. House of Representatives for the late Cong. George “Mickey” Leland, and Cong. Mike Andrews. With a career that began as young as the age of 18, she was the youngest member to serve on the Democratic National Convention Credentials Committee and also created the first Mickey Leland Youth Task Force. Carmen was recently honored by the Houston Bar Association with the Matthew W. Plummer Sr. Justice Award - 2006 and the 2006 YMCA Young Minority Achievers Award.

When she is not involved in the community or at the station, Carmen spends time with her husband of 22 years and two daughters.

Create a sound business plan

Many people who have always wanted to start their own business never do, simply because they're overwhelmed by the process and unsure of what specifically is involved. With a to-do list that includes everything from writing a business plan to coming up with a name to hiring employees, startup can seem daunting.

A solid plan can help you start off strong and stay that way. Writing a business plan is one of the first steps you should take toward startup, well before you launch your business. A business plan will serve as your guide to decision making during the life of your business, starting with the question of whether to start in the first place. The second use of a plan is to satisfy lenders and investors, virtually all of whom will require a written business plan before approving a loan or making an equity investment. Plans also serve as a means of communicating with potential partners, allies, vendors, employees and even customers.

Here are some tips to help you get started.

*Before putting pen to paper, research resources and tools that can help. In addition to books, software programs can automate the task. You can get live help from your local SBA office or Small Business Development Center, college and university classes, and private courses or conferences.

- Be realistic when making projections. One of the most frequent errors made when writing a business plan is over-estimating revenue and under-estimating expenses. Improve revenue estimates by narrowing your target market down to a realistic niche, then interpret revenue and expenses in terms of that market.
- Include monthly cash-flow projections for the first year. Also prepare an overall projection of profit and loss for three years, as well as a projected balance sheet. Calculate the break-even point at which sales will cover costs. Research financial ratios specific to your industry, and look at published industry-specific ratios to make sure your assumptions are realistic.

- Pay special attention to marketing. First, develop goals. Second, do a market analysis, including identifying target markets, researching competition and assessing market trends. Then prepare a marketing strategy, including your approaches to sales, promotions, advertising, PR, networking, community building, customer service and other marketing channels and tools. Develop a plan to implement that marketing strategy, and include benchmarks to see if what you planned actually happened.

- Choose your target customer, then take aim in the right direction. Open the doors to your business, and it's easy to think of the whole world as your oyster. Why focus on a target market and exclude all those other market segments with which you could be conducting business, right?

- Find the perfect match. The most important thing a small-business owner can do is figure out what kind of customers will help them get to the goal. Who are the most strategically valuable people to them? Identify as many traits as possible so you can organize your business to keep those customers coming back.

- Identify different segments. After you've outlined whom your best customers will be, recognize that you may have more than one profile. For instance, a catering business may find lucrative market segments in cooking and presenting elaborate holiday meals for affluent families, as well as providing simple, daily heat-and-serve meals for busy working parents.

- Service, service, service. More small businesses lose customers [due to] poor service than bad products. Your business's most important marketing tool is the way you conduct sales and service customers. Every time you do work for a client, you are marketing yourself. When you do that well, customers pay you back with loyalty and referrals.

Helping Entrepreneurs, Virtually

By Misty Starks

Contributing Writer



Desmond Turner is in a quandary faced by many small business owners. He has so much work he can't focus on minute details, but he's not at the point where he needs a full-time office assistant. Turner, owner of A+ Landscaping, is a perfect candidate for virtual assistance.

Hiring a virtual assistant (VA) is a practical and affordable solution to helping manage many small but growing businesses. Thanks to speedy advancements in technology, entrepreneurs have access to highly-skilled professionals. A VA is someone who handles administrative functions such as e-mailing, faxing, database management and bookkeeping from a remote location. Highly skilled assistants can also offer help with website maintenance, customer

and client contact and even marketing material, all services that would greatly benefit Turner's business.

"Because I'm in the landscape industry, I spend the majority of my time outside of the office, which means I don't really have time to devote to answering e-mails and sending faxes," said Turner. "Having a professional who could serve as a liaison between me and my clients would be invaluable."

Invaluable indeed, since not having an assistant means late nights spent catching up on paperwork like contracts and bookkeeping.

Virtual assistance companies often span several industries, and some assistants even offer help with the clients' personal lives by organizing social gatherings, making doctor appointments and arranging travel plans.

Virtual assistants offer several advantages over do-it-yourself practices or temporary and part-time workers, the main benefit being that they're cost-effective. The employer has no payroll taxes, workers' comp or temp agency commission fees. Small companies could also save money on office space, equipment, pensions, insurance and the like. Another advantage for business owners is that they would have full access to assistants while only paying for work that was actually done. The average VA works on an hourly basis, charging \$15 per hour and up.

Employers who are thinking about hiring a virtual assistant are urged to do research beforehand to ensure a profitable match. A good VA may be instrumental in helping with the mundane tasks while business owners focus on advancing the company's goals.

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Midtown Clinical Associates wants there to be no doubt...they are committed to caring for you and your family. Doctors Ednia Walls and Rhonda Barnes-Jordan take pride in making their business a place where you can find doctors that will be committed to your healthcare needs.

They tout their facility as one where patients will find staff members who are committed to providing, unmatched, quality, comprehensive healthcare.

Walls and Barnes-Jordan are two childhood friends, who are committed to making a difference in improving quality healthcare in the community and decided to go into business to make that happen.

Dr. Barnes-Jordan, was born in St. Louis, MO, and graduated with a BS from Xavier University of LA. She received her Medical Doctorate from the University of TN, Memphis, and completed her residency training at the Memorial Southwest Family Practice Residency Program, in Houston, Texas. "I believe that as a healthcare

provider, I should be a role model, educator, and mentor to my patients. I have a strong interest in helping my patients live healthier and happier lives," she said.

Also a St. Louis native, Dr. Walls is a board certified Family Physician. She completed her undergraduate studies at Xavier University of Louisiana.

Fulfilling her desire to provide families with comprehensive, quality healthcare, she went on to study medicine at the University of Columbia-Missouri.

Midtown Clinical Associates

After receiving her doctorate in medicine, Dr. Walls attended the University of Texas-Houston in the world renowned Medical Center.

There, she completed her residency in Family Medicine.

"I want my patients to know that, here, they are receiving the best of quality healthcare," she said. Specializing in outpatient and hospital care, her patients to feel comfortable knowing they are receiving community healthcare at its very best.



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Left: Ednia Nichelle Walls, MD - Right: Rhonda Barnes Jordan, MD



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Stopping the Headache of Migraines

Any busy business person will tell you – they don't have time to deal with migraines. But unfortunately migraines have become a big headache for many in today's working world.

The American Medical Association estimates that U.S. businesses lose more than \$15 billion a year to migraines and migraine-type headaches. Thirteen percent of that is in direct costs such as medical care, physician visits, diagnostic testing, medication and emergency department visits. The remaining \$13 billion is in indirect costs, mainly absenteeism and presenteeism, and the employer bears much of the burden. There are an estimated 23.6 million migraine sufferers in the United States. There are another 11.3 million who suffer moderate to severe headaches, and another 4.5 million who have at least one or more migraine headaches per month. These are staggering figures. Approximately 18 percentage of all adult women are afflicted with the problem. Women also suffer from migraines at a rate of 3:1 ratio over men. This equals approximately 18 million women or 1 in 6 American women suffering from headaches.

A migraine, unlike other headaches, usually is on one side of the head, often behind the eye and there often are other symptoms -- an upset stomach or disturbed vision. About 75 percent of the sufferers are women.

Houston physician, Dr. Kevin Smith, a plastic surgeon and otolaryngologist, may have found a way to combat the problem. For starters, he advises his patients to make sure it's a migraine.

"Over the years, I discovered that a deviated nasal septum and/or bone spur can interact with the nasal tissues in ways that produce severe and recurring headaches," he says. "True migraine headaches are vascular, where the blood vessels in the brain are tremendously effected. But there are other kinds of headaches that seem like migraines -- light sensitive, noise sensitive, nauseating, even temporary loss of sight -- but they aren't migraines. That's where the septoplasty may be the solution."

The first encounter with healthcare for a migraine headache sufferer usually starts with the over-the-counter preparations. Mild headaches can sometimes be relieved with these medications. However, when a persistent severe migraine headache arises, it usually alerts the patient to seek treatment from their primary care physician, who is obligated to

rule out organic causes or medical causes of the headache after obtaining a thorough history and physical examination.

From the primary care's office, a resistant headache can be referred to specialists. This typically involves a neurologist who will examine the patient for possible brain abnormalities, such as tumors and aneurysms. For those who suffer from nasal airway obstruction, allergies or sinus problems, referral to an otolaryngologist is indicated.

"The nose potentially plays more of a role in headaches than we are led to believe. Bone spurs within the nose can contribute to migraine headaches and the development of nasal airway obstruction and sinus problems," Smith said. "However, although it is taught in residency training programs and medical seminars, not much emphasis is placed on the potential importance of the nasal structure and the potential to cause headaches."

When patients find themselves with severe headaches, they are desperate to find a cure. During this desperate time it is common to be told that the headache is stress related or "in your mind."

Triggers of headaches involving septal spurs include anything that cause the intranasal cavity to swell. Hormones, environmental changes, health conditions, and allergies to food and beverages can all lead to intranasal swelling of the turbinates against a bone spur, triggering a headache. Women who suffer headaches during their menstrual cycle do so because of hormonal imbalances, which lead to retention of water that causes the turbinates to become engorged and swell against a septal spur or deviation.

An otolaryngologist should be a key contributor in evaluating headache sufferers for possible septal spurs. A nasal exam is rarely performed by a primary care or neurologist.

Intranasal surgery can potentially eliminate headaches. When a septal spur has been diagnosed, the surgical procedure to remove it is called a septoplasty. With this procedure, a small incision is made inside the nostril, and the mucous membrane is elevated off of the septum. The

septal spur is removed to relieve the pressure point. The turbinates can be pushed aside to eliminate

any other contact points with the septum. If congestion is a major problem, the turbinates can be trimmed to allow for improved breathing. Once the septum is straightened, the mucosal flaps are reapproximated with a dissolvable suture. There is no need for intranasal packing unless there is excessive bleeding during the operative procedure.

"In the past, patients who underwent septoplasty had their noses packed tightly with gauze and during the first post operative visit. When the gauze was removed these patients described excruciating pain. Surgical techniques have progressed over the years, and now if packing is required, it usually consists of a soft sponge that applies gentle pressure to the nose in order to minimize bleeding. In my practice the goal is to not pack the nose if possible. This makes the post-operative recovery period much more pleasant," he said.

"I recommend all headache and migraine sufferers to visit an otolaryngologist who can thoroughly examine the intranasal cavity and rule out the presence of a bone spur. Please keep in mind, however, that there are some otolaryngologists that do not recognize the deformity. So before you talk to the doctor to see if they believe a septal spur can cause headaches, a simple procedure that someone's life," Smith said.



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Coping with Market Volatility



By Ken Carwin Glover
Registered Investment Advisor, Contributing Writer
Tel. 281-755-7167

During the past two months, the stock market experienced increased volatility, when securities prices sharply rose or fell within a relatively short period of time. As a result, many investors have become understandably uncertain about the stock market. Whether you are currently "in the market" or are considering entering, you've probably been wondering: "What's the best course of investment action to take during these periods of unsettled market activity?"

Don't Overreact

It's somewhat of a cliché to say that two emotions — fear and greed — is the driving forces behind a good deal of stock market activity. During a bull market, as share prices rise, some investors develop a false sense of confidence regarding future price levels and believe that nothing short of catastrophe will stop the continuing upward trend. In their zeal, they erroneously project their short-term gains into an uncertain and long-term future.

On the other side of this coin lies the disappointment that may set in whenever market values start to drop within a relatively short period. During these bear markets, some investors overreact and begin imagining a loss of their nest eggs due to lower share prices. They may even begin selling their holdings in the fear that prices may fall even further.

It's important, however, for individual investors to view market volatility in its proper perspective. Swings in stock market prices, even those lasting a few months or years, generally should not be allowed to disrupt your long-term investment strategy. Why? It's simple. Historically speaking, long-term investing has tended to smooth out many of the fits and starts that can cause investors so much short-term discomfort.

Focus on Long-Term Objectives

Setting a middle course, one that avoids both bullish euphoria and bearish

despair, can help individual investors keep their long-term financial objectives in sight. A focus on long-term objectives also helps avoid the temptation of trying to predict what the financial markets will do tomorrow, next week or next month. Long-term investors realize that even investment professionals cannot always accurately predict short-term market movements.

Adopting a long-term investment philosophy also helps guard against overreacting to business stories that appear in the newspapers or other media. Regardless of whether such news is generally thought to be "good" or "bad," always consult with a competent Investment Advisor to evaluate the potential impact of these developments on your overall investment plan.

ZZZZ

Reviewing your financial strategy at least yearly is yet another way of helping you cope with market volatility. As you review, make sure your investment plan takes into account your age and investment timeline, as well as your financial resources and tolerance for risk. At least for the foreseeable future, occasional spells of stock market volatility are probably unavoidable. However, following a long-term financial plan can help you to weather the storm.

This article does not constitute tax or legal advice. Consult your tax or legal advisors before making any tax- or legally-related investment decisions. This article is published for general informational purposes and is not an offer or solicitation to sell or buy any securities or commodities. Any particular investment should be analyzed based on its terms and risks as they relate to your circumstances and objectives.

Boosting Black Female Entrepreneurs

Whether your business is in growth mode, the start-up phase, or somewhere in between, there's nothing quite like the help of a good business resource group to help the process along. For African-American women seeking help with funding, business plans, networking, expansion, and other strategies, there are many support options to consider.

According to the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership (OWBO), women are starting new firms at twice the rate that all other businesses are being started. Women currently own about 9.1 million firms in the U.S. These firms employ 27.5 million and contribute \$3.6 trillion to the U.S. economy. With over 90 centers nationwide, OWBO provides companies with assistance and/or training in finance, management, marketing, and procurement. There's even workshops and mentoring programs, during which the entrepreneur is walked through the basics of running a business from start to finish.

"Some finish with a business plan in hand, while others are prepared to go out and start their own enterprises right away," boasts Wilma Goldstein, OWBO's associate administrator.

"African-American women need to go with the flow of new business trends," says Robin

L. Douglas, president of the African-American Chamber of Commerce of Westchester and Rockland counties. "We need to teach and learn new buzzwords and work within the definition of those trends."

Bill Edwards, executive director for the Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO), agrees that a degree of racial discrimination or stereotyping does persist in the business world, despite the great strides that African-American women continue to make. However, he says navigating the stormy waters isn't impossible, thanks to support groups like AEO's Microenterprise Program, which offers lending, training, and technical assistance to entrepreneurs primarily in urban areas with low to moderate incomes.

For women seeking help with their budding or growing businesses, listed above are six national groups, contact information, and a summary of their offerings. Many are based in the Northeast, but most have offices nationwide.

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Fraternities, sororities fight Converse

DALLAS - Six black fraternities and sororities are suing Converse Inc., claiming the shoe company used their colors and founding dates on sneakers without permission.

The lawsuit in U.S. District Court claims trademark infringement and unfair competition over Converse's GREEKPAK basketball shoes, which it began selling in 2003. The shoes are no longer sold.

"Converse is using our trademark just as if they were to put Coca-Cola's marks on a shoe of theirs without asking to use it," Michael Pegues, a Dallas patent attorney and Alpha Phi Alpha leader, said.

A Converse spokeswoman said in a statement that the company wants to resolve the matter but did not comment on the specific allegations. The company has said the Greek traditional colors and founding years are not trademarked. North Andover, Mass.-based Converse, was bought by Nike in 2003.

The fraternities and sororities contend that together those marks are recognized as belonging to the fraternity or sorority and should be protected by law even without trademark registration.

The suit seeks an injunction against further use of the designs as well as unspecified

monetary damages. The Converse brand is part of Nike Inc.

The Greek organizations date to the early 1900s, when black students faced enormous discrimination and were barred from white fraternities.

The groups — Alpha Kappa Alpha, Alpha Phi Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Delta Sigma Theta and Phi Beta Sigma — filed their suit in December 2003. But U.S. District Judge Jane Boyle dismissed it. In April, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned part of the ruling and returned the case to court. Boyle has yet to set a date for hearings on the lawsuit.

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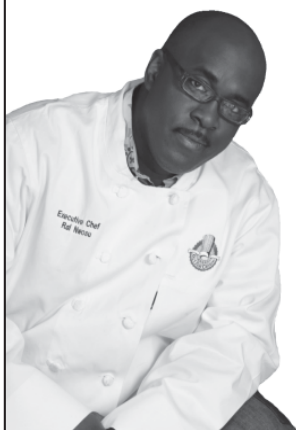
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Doing Business with Belize, An International Opportunity

By Sharon C. Jenkins
Contributing Writer



Our Caribbean sister city Belize, recently opened the door to global prospecting for Houston's businesses at the Tri-County Black Chamber of Commerce's Annual International Business Opportunity Conference at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The purpose of this conference was to "promote, educate, and foster an international network, which in turn will expand Houston businesses interested in international trade and development."

Workshop topics focused on the "how to do" business with Belize, incorporating presentations from the U.S. Department of Commerce, BELTRAIDE, Belize Tourist Board, SBA International Trade Division and EXIM Bank.

Leondra Thompson, President of the Tri-County Black Chamber of Commerce said that the chamber chose Belize because it is an English speaking country. The locality of the country also influenced the chamber's decision. Belize is in the middle of several Latin American countries and just two hours away from Houston.

"It is now time to start thinking globally, we must now open up new markets for ourselves. The world is our clientele," she said. "We may be looking for our niche market and it may not always be in your backyard. We must not just think out of the box, we must move out of the box!"

Tri-County Chamber has done just that by sponsoring this conference. Participants also got an opportunity to network with Belizean business owners in the Exhibit Hall of the conference, where a host of skilled and talented entrepreneurs displayed their country's finest.

One Belizean artisan particularly stood out because of his evident passion and love for people in general, Stephen Okeke, a sculptor, author, and academician. His exquisite talent gave

conferees a picturesque representation of his country.

Okeke stated that the conference was personally a very eye opening experience for him. He was able to make contacts and forge the framework that will help him to forward his research on an upcoming novel titled *How to Succeed in America as an African American*.

There was also an awards luncheon honoring businessmen, academic leaders, and politicians that have promoted and supported an international consciousness in Houston. Recipients included Dr. Kase L. Lawal of CAMAC International, Mr. Michael Harness of CEO of Osyka Corporation, Mr. Carlos Lopez of the University of Houston International Trade Center, Mr. Jose Villarreal of Houston Community College (HCC), Dr. Joseph L. Boyd of Texas Southern University, the Honorable Ronald C. Green, the Honorable James Grady Prestage, the Honorable Rodney D. Ellis, the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee, and Dr. Michael P. Williams of Joy Tabernacle Church.

Speaking of special people doing special things in the Houston community, Damani Farquharson, a youth supporter of diversity and volunteer with HCC was also awarded a \$500.00 scholarship to the college during the luncheon. Farquharson was given this scholarship because of his exceptional service during the La Rosca de Reyes Celebration, HCC's Black History event, and the Jamaican Festival. He worked on the event set-up committee and wooed participants and committee members with his professional style and people skills.

Another featured guest of the Belize trade delegation was Her Worship Madam Mayoress Zenaida Moya, the mayor of Belize City, Belize. This profound lady brought her vision from one of the largest cities in Belize to Houston, that of economic empowerment for her city and her country. When one meets the mayoress, she embraces you in the spirit of hospitality that is common to her culture. In Belize City she has broken down barriers and participated in being the "first" in quite a few positions that historically have been held by men. When asked

if as a little girl she aspired to be the mayor of Belize City, she responded "no", her highest political aspiration was to be a United Nations ambassador.

In regards to the conference and Belize doing business with Houstonians she said, "When two different cultures meet and believe that they have things in common and they have the means and the potential to exploit this interest in a positive way, the sky is the limit to having that possibility expand and broaden."

She advised anyone interested in doing business in Belize to come with an open mind, they have a lot to offer and expect to do business with individuals of different cultures and ethnicities. One of the many benefits of doing business in Belize is that it is an English and Spanish speaking country. Therefore if a business should decide to manufacture their product in Belize, they will have the competitive advantage of exporting and importing their product to surrounding countries.

She said that there are a lot of similarities between Houston and Belize City such as the diversity in each country, the mannerisms of the people and the cultural peculiarities. As an encouragement to her American brothers and sisters the mayoress quoted Elie Wiesel (1986 Nobel Peace Prize Winner), "To be silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all." Her advise to minorities in America was to recognize that there is a lot of power in being unique. She said there is a quote in her country that says, "Don't hide your light under a bucket." She encouraged them to be risk takers and to carry their uniqueness wherever they go and while they are there look for other opportunities to carry back home to share with their community.

Houstonians in attendance at the conference were "Houston Friendly" to our Belize delegation and formed reciprocal business relations that all hope will lead to a long prosperous business connection.

Making Millions

By Traci Lynn
Contributing Writer



Businesswoman Traci Lynn frequently tells people that the power of positive thinking, coupled with a lot of hard work, a little money, and God's timing, will indeed make you a millionaire.

It was this simple, yet cogent notion that catapulted Lynn into a multimillion-dollar entrepreneur several years ago.

In 1989, Lynn launched Traci Lynn International Inc. with just \$200 and a prayer. The company is a conglomerate of several businesses, including motivational speaking, financial empowerment seminars, several franchise units, and a retail jewelry business. Revenues for Traci Lynn International topped \$2 million in 2004-the most recent figures available.

"I couldn't get a loan from anyone," says Lynn. "I had bad credit and owed everybody."

Eventually, she purchased some fashion jewelry pieces from a wholesale outlet in New York. She sold the items out of plastic containers to members of her church. She reinvested her initial \$200 back into the business and purchased more items from a wholesaler until her initial investment doubled and tripled.

Soon, Lynn went from transporting her jewelry from Tupperware containers to suitcases and expanded her market from the local church to neighborhood beauty shops and salons. She eventually opened a store.

Lynn conducts financial empowerment seminars titled *The Mind of a Millionaire* and offers this advice to aspiring entrepreneurs:

1. The tongue is a creative force.

Lynn espouses this Biblical passage to her clients: Life and death is in the power of the tongue. "If you say, 'I'm broke,' you will be broke," she says. "Instead, say, 'my money is circulating and on its way back to me.'"

2. Till your own land.

Don't be intimidated if things don't work out the first few times. "I had three businesses that failed," Lynn says. "I tell people that the businesses failed and not me-that's what kept me going and gave me the drive to start another business."

3. Keep the faith.

Lynn, who was raised in the church, says success is measured by the faith one has in God. "Faith is the main ingredient in success," she says.

4. The pimp and the prostitute.

"If you don't start your own business you are prostituting your entrepreneurial talents for other people's gain," she says. "Fear of failure is no excuse for not starting your business and becoming a millionaire."

5. Fleeing the wilderness.

Lynn says horror stories about people inheriting or earning millions and then filing for bankruptcy years later are all too common. "Becoming a millionaire does not always eliminate a welfare mentality of someone used to an impoverished lifestyle," she says. She encourages clients to develop a first class mentality and to "fake it until you make it."

6. Why shouldn't I be rich and leave a legacy?

Finally, have a positive attitude and ask yourself why shouldn't you enjoy the benefits of unlimited wealth and become a money magnet. Lynn says that money is not always the evil some people say it is. "Money attracts money," she says. "Surround yourself with successful people so when you die, you will only die empty but not broke!"



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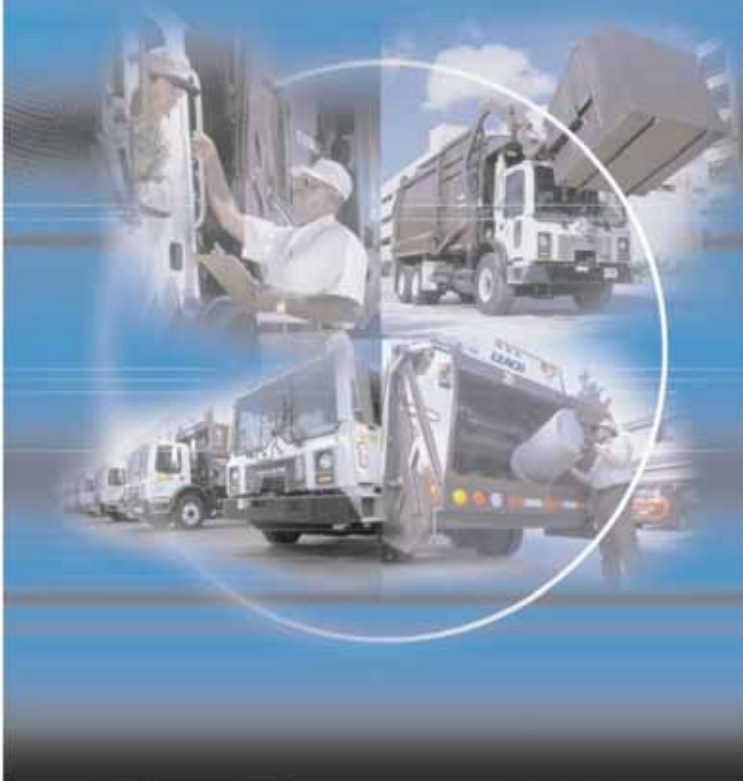
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Whoever said you have to pick one passion and pursue it, never met Kenneth M. Plaisance. An established New Orleans attorney, Plaisance has made a name for himself in the Crescent City as a multi-line claims adjuster, serious bodily injury claims representative, technical specialist and insurance agent for three major insurance companies. Sounds like a lot, right? Not for Plaisance, who is also a gospel singing artist.

"I can prepare briefs to the appellate court and writs to the United States Supreme Court. I have most of my experience in Personal Injury automobile accident and employment discrimination. But what makes me special is not the numerous cases that have been published, or the areas of law that I practice, I believe I am a human being. I like to write poems and songs short movies, scripts and videos. This keeps me balanced," he said.

Plaisance has an extensive background in insurance law. He has gone to insurance policy school, taken courses in insurance law and has a master tort law in Louisiana. There are only a few attorneys with his expertise, credentials and know-how in the area of automobile accident personal injury/tort law.

"It might be naïve, but I fell in love with the beautiful words of the preamble of the Constitution and the words of equality. I fell in love with the words of justices, truth, freedom and righteousness. I thought I can be a part of change. To right some wrong done to fight some people that politically controlled the court system," he said.

Unlike some attorneys, Plaisance says he is not motivated by money. He gets personal fulfillment in what he does.

"I had plans to become a millionaire before 35. I had some set backs (Hurricanes Katrina and Rita), but I am still working on being prosperous. You must realize that you are rich in other ways. Another reward is helping people with their legal problems, because if you have compassion for people you began to care and this allows the money to be less important. Although, righteousness and justice are not the same sometimes. You also must watch out what law you are trying to change. Do you change the law to win the case or do you do it to bring about social justice. But what is the most satisfying to me about my job is sometimes when you

become cited in the law books, you are not only immortalized, you are part of justice because of your thoughts or legal premise."

But Plaisance's passions extend beyond the courtroom. He has been writing poetry since he was 16. In the early 1980s, Plaisance wrote the song "Real Belief." In 1987, he wrote the song/poem "Black Hole." In 1997, he wrote and co produced the compilation CD "Black Hole" CD, a project that takes the music to another level by combining rap and jazz, and rap and gospel. There are two gospel songs, two jazz rap songs, and other musical concepts as well.

In addition, Kenneth M. Plaisance has a debut CD called "Seriously and Deliriously Still in love with You."

Plaisance is now ready to embark on this music journey of love, hope, faith as it relates to relationships. He is charting a course to become not only an entertainer, but a great entertainment attorney as well. "I believe that God gave me the opportunity to help people. To those that much is given much is expected," he said.

And he plans to continue to give, citing his persistence and tenacity as his driving force, advice he encourages others with as well.

"Be persistent and relentless in your spirit. Let God be your partner. Without the grace of God I could not have achieved so much. My motto is 'Do it right, do it now, and be aggressive.'"

And above all else, stay committed to the community.

"Before Hurricane Katrina, my office and my Dad's grocery store was in a low income area--the community my parents grew up in. After my Dad died, I continued to serve the community. Then Katrina happened and I had to start all over. But I am blessed to be in Houston. It is a challenge but I plan to be in Houston because it's progressive and there are unlimited opportunities," he said.

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Washington Mutual: Working for the Community

By T. Blacknell
Contributing Writer

Whether it's working with kids in the community or offering home loans to low-income families, Washington Mutual has been a driving force in the community for over 100 years. In 1998, Washington Mutual (WaMu) made history by announcing the then- largest-ever CRA commitment to the communities they serve. At the time, they pledged \$120 billion over a ten-year period to serve a wide range of community needs and issues.

They are gratified that with the help of community partners, Washington Mutual has already reached almost 30 percent of that ten-year CRA goal in only two years. They view this accomplishment as an opportunity to do even more, which is why they increased their commitment to communities. Beginning in 2002, Washington Mutual committed \$375 billion to low- to moderate-income communities over a ten-year period.

"We are always finding ways to put money back into the community," says Sharon Phillips, Vice President/ Community Development Manager for the Central region of Washington Mutual. "Wherever we take deposits and do business, we must give back. So this is our way of truly giving back, by supporting those initiatives that are geared toward families."

These funds will provide loans and other financial support to communities consisting

predominantly of people of color, to residents of low- to moderate-income (LMI) census tracts, and to people whose income is below 80 percent of median income. Washington Mutual will strive to create products and programs that increase the market share in low income and diverse communities, with a long-term goal of making its market share in these communities more closely mirror its market share overall.

Phillips says that all of the programs and initiatives they choose to be involved with must be within their focus area and their mission of affordable housing and education. Because they believe it's never too soon to learn the fundamentals of basic money management that will last a lifetime, Washington Mutual sponsors a number of education programs for children of all ages. Most noteworthy of the programs is the company's School Savings® program, which was founded in 1923.

For nearly eighty years School Savings has been teaching children the value of thrift by literally bringing the bank to school each week for deposits as little as a dime. Local financial center managers oversee the transactions at each school with the help of parent volunteers.



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The Business of Breeding Talent



Je'Caryous and Leon

Je'Caryous Johnson, Founder and CEO of I'm Ready Productions doesn't claim to know everything. But he does know how to write, produce, and pull off successful stage plays. At 29, he is one of the youngest, and most successful African-American playwrights in the country. So, he does know good talent when he sees it. And while he knows his hometown of Houston is probably full of very talented people, he also knows there's very little opportunity for the cultivation of such talent.

Instead of sitting back and complaining about the problem or lack of opportunities for the young and talented here in Houston, Johnson is rolling up his sleeves and committing to doing something about it. He is announcing the formation of the 'I'm Ready School of the Arts.' He's

convinced; such a facility is desperately needed here in the Bayou City.

"Almost everyday we get phone calls from aspiring writers, actors, and producers," said Johnson. "And they all want the same thing – to know how they break in the business or they want me to take them under my wings and show them the ropes. Everybody says they already have the basics, the talent, the ambition, and definitely the drive, but nowhere to really learn the ropes."

He said he finally decided to do something about the problem after fielding one too many of those phone calls. Johnson said while the local colleges and universities are turning out graduates educated in the arts, there's little direction after they receive that degree. He says Houston is definitely a breeding ground for talented people who, with the right training, can soar to incredible heights. But in order to do so, a school, or facility like his is needed. He wants to offer professional training that the colleges and universities just can't provide.

Johnson said far too many African Americans, particularly young people, look at the world of entertainment and think unless they can rap or dance there's just not a place for them.

"I want to reach out to that writer whose head is so full of ideas; he sleeps with a notepad next to his bed. I want to let that production student know there is someone who wants to take their talent and cultivate it into something that yields success," he said.

Johnson envisions a training facility that will turn out some of the best in screenwriting, playwriting, and production, which includes actors, who can go on and compete on a national level.

"It's one thing to be talented here in Houston, Texas in the south," he said. "But when you're talking about going up against people from New York, Miami, and Hollywood, where we know thousands if not more, flock in search of stardom every single day, well, you've got to be on point," Johnson added. "We have some great talent here, but I've seen it time and time again, when it comes time to go up against people from California and New York, Houstonians, as a whole, simply fall short."

Johnson said 'I'm Ready School of the Arts' is his way of giving back to the community and helping others to break into this very competitive business.

"I plan to provide regular updates on our website about the progress of the school and where we are with this project. But believe me, when we launch, everyone from the east to the west coast, from the north to the south, will know. And they'll know that we're going to be ready to compete," he said.

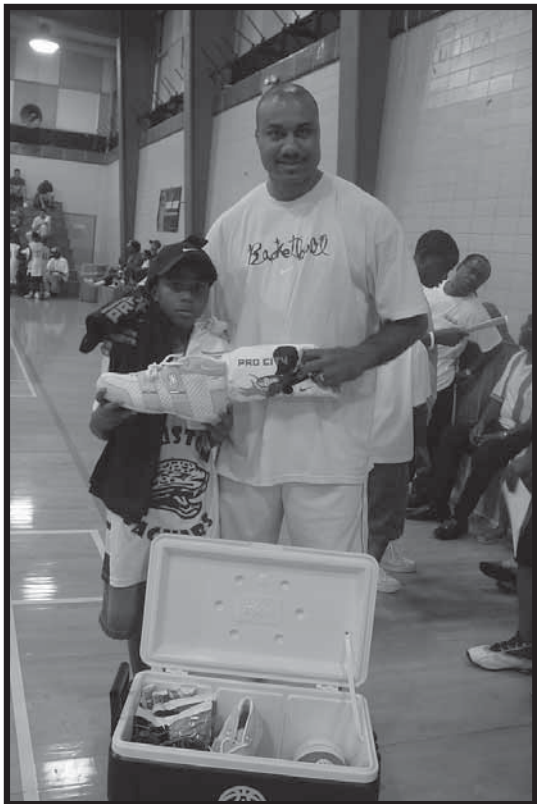
And in order to compete, he's looking for the best.

"We won't have any age or education restrictions for those who participate in the school, but we're only looking for the serious, committed people who are ready to take their talents to the next level," he said. "We will choose at least ten people for a four-week crash course in their areas of expertise, which will include screenwriting, playwriting and production."

The classes will be taught by professional in the respective fields.

'I'm Ready School of the Arts' will launch in summer of 2007. Johnson is both excited and passionate about this project. If his track record is any indicator, you can expect to hear and see big things from this innovative entrepreneur who shows no signs of slowing down, at least not until he has an army of local talented people right next to him at the top.

The Rookie Foundation in our Community



Kevin Granger is benefiting the Houston community again with his various events. One of his events is the Nike Houston Pro City Summer Basketball League. This league brings together professional, collegiate, and street ball legends to the basketball court. The Nike Houston Pro City Summer League takes place every Monday and Wednesday night at the historical Fonde Community Center, which is located at 110 Sabine Street.

From the rim rockin' dunks, to the super crossovers, and the sweet jump shots, it is the premier basketball event of the summer. What is most amazing about this event Granger provides to the community is that it's free to the public.

The fans may also receive free Nike apparel through the many give-a-ways during the games. So make plans to attend one of the hottest events of the summer.

Granger also provides other events for the young people in the community through the foundation he and his wife established called The Rookie Foundation.

The Rookie Foundation makes available to the youth of the Houston area basketball clinics, mentoring and

tutoring programs. The foundation also sponsors an outing for kids to attend a Houston Rockets basketball game, donates money to the ASK program for college scholarships, and puts on a celebrity softball classic for the Houston community.

The Rookie Foundation makes an annual donation of basketball shoes to Granger's high school basketball team. Granger is making an impact on the Houston community through his various events and programs.

For more information about these events and programs by visiting his web site at www.houstonprocity.com



SPECIAL CORNER

by Tongela Clark

When life throws you blows remember
It's A Fixed Fight"
"The Change Agent"
Author of
"Dropped Out But Not Knocked Out"

What Makes a Person Special?

by Deacon Ramone Harper

What a great theme to have for this month's Business Journal: Special people doing special things in the community. As I prepared to write this month's article, I really had to think hard about what I would write about. I also wondered what Mr. DMARS' criterion was for selecting the people featured in this edition. Although I believe all the individuals are deserving of mention, I am sure there are other business persons in the city of Houston who deserve honorable mention as well. So after thinking about these things it lead me to one pertinent question....What makes a person special or unique?

These two terms (special and unique) are defined as being the only one, being without a like or equal, distinguished by some unusual quality, readily distinguishable from others of the same category. But the definition I like the most is the one that says a special person is designed for a particular purpose or occasion. Let me repeat that; a special person is designed for a particular purpose!!!! There is the answer. Each person featured in this edition and all the special people in the world have been created for purpose.

In the book of Jeremiah, it states "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." This is a word from the Lord to Jeremiah encouraging him to understand that there is a purpose for his life and that there is something special that he was created to do. Every successful person is a person who has found their purpose (or calling) in life. Without purpose, people have no direction, they have no destination, and they have no vision. Once you discover your purpose in life, everything begins to make sense. You then begin to understand why you were born, why you had to experience the ups and downs you have endured, why you went to that school, why you desire the things you do, etc.

Each person featured in this month's cover story like Sam Choice and Keith Davis have done extraordinary things in the community because

they all have purpose. They also have special talents that have been given to them in order to fulfill a particular assignment here on earth. So by saying all of this, what is your purpose in your life? There is best selling book in stores called The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren. In that book he attempts to help the reader come to know their purpose in life. He states that our purpose is to live our lives serving God's purposes with God's people on God's planet for God's glory. He says, "I will use my life to celebrate his presence, cultivate his character, participate in his family, demonstrate his love, and communicate his Word."

So in tribute to the people featured in this article and past editions such as Pastor Johnson, JeCaryous Johnson, Chef RaI, David Edwards, Farrah Gray, Devra Daughtry, Sharon Phillips, Aaron Glenn, Jason Medlock and all the others, we praise God that they have all found their purpose in life and are using their unique gifts to make a difference in our communities. The fact that they are giving back to the community makes them special and I encourage all entrepreneurs and business leaders to find your purpose in life and begin making a difference in other people's lives.

There is good news for those of you that feel that you aren't special or haven't found your purpose. Everyone that God creates has a unique purpose and every person that accepts Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be a given special gifts that will help them accomplish special things in life for God's purpose. So whether you are an athlete, entertainer, multi-millionaire CEO, school teacher, or a young person with a dream like Keith Davis Jr., you are special in God's eyes and you too can do special things!

Hurricane-Proof Your Business

By Misty Starks
Contributing Writer

When Chana Daniel packed up to evacuate from the New Orleans area just before Hurricane Katrina hit last year, she had no idea she would never be able to return to her business. As a hair stylist with her own salon, Daniel's business was completely wiped out after the hurricane made landfall. Not only was the salon located in one of the hardest hit areas, Daniel's customer base was suddenly non-existent.

"My livelihood depended on those clients, and suddenly those clients were gone," Daniel said. "It's a scary feeling to not know if you'll ever get back to where you once were."

Like most Katrina victims, Daniel was unprepared for the vast devastation that the hurricane caused. Thousands of businesses failed after the disaster simply because they lost contact with employees and customers. Many small companies either don't have an emergency plan or has one that is outdated.

Daniel was forced to relocate for months while she got her business and personal affairs in order. Thanks to a loan from the Small Business Administration, she was eventually able to return home and open up shop again, but trying to drum up business was still a daunting task given that many of her regular customers were scattered across the country.

"Every time one of my customers comes back to town, it's a blessing," Daniel said. "I do have some new clients now also because a lot of the other hairdressers in town aren't coming back."

According to the Red Cross, as many as 40 percent of

businesses do not reopen after major natural disasters. No business should operate without a disaster plan.

PLANNING

Your employees are your most valuable asset. Get your employees to think ahead. Create a contact list and keep the information up-to-date and accessible to everyone. Include emergency numbers for local agencies such as the fire and police departments, hospitals and government relief agencies. Offer staff training in CPR and first aid. Make sure key employees have access to cash, generators, batteries, food, water and a fully stocked first aid kit.

Designate a command person in your absence. No one likes to think about their own demise, but if you were seriously hurt, who would run the business? Designate a member of your management team as the point person if you are unable to lead and clearly communicate to other staff members who are in charge in the event of such an emergency.

Revisit your insurance policy. If you don't have business interruption insurance, consider upgrading your policy to include this type of coverage. Interruption insurance would continue to pay salaries, utilities and possibly rent for a temporary office.

Back up computer files on a regular basis. Anything you cannot easily replace should be backed up. This may include personal projects, financial information, employee files and your e-mail address book. There are many software packages available that are reasonably priced to create a separate copy of all important files.

Protect the office and equipment. If possible, unplug

computers and other electronic equipment and store in a high place. Stock up on plywood, tape and other items needed to shield the windows from flying debris. If you and your employees have to evacuate, consider leaving the office lights on to discourage looters. Consider finding emergency office space ahead of time in the event that your office or building is damaged.

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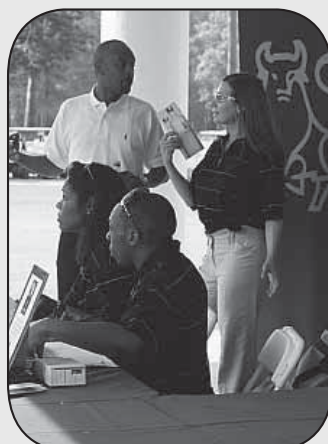


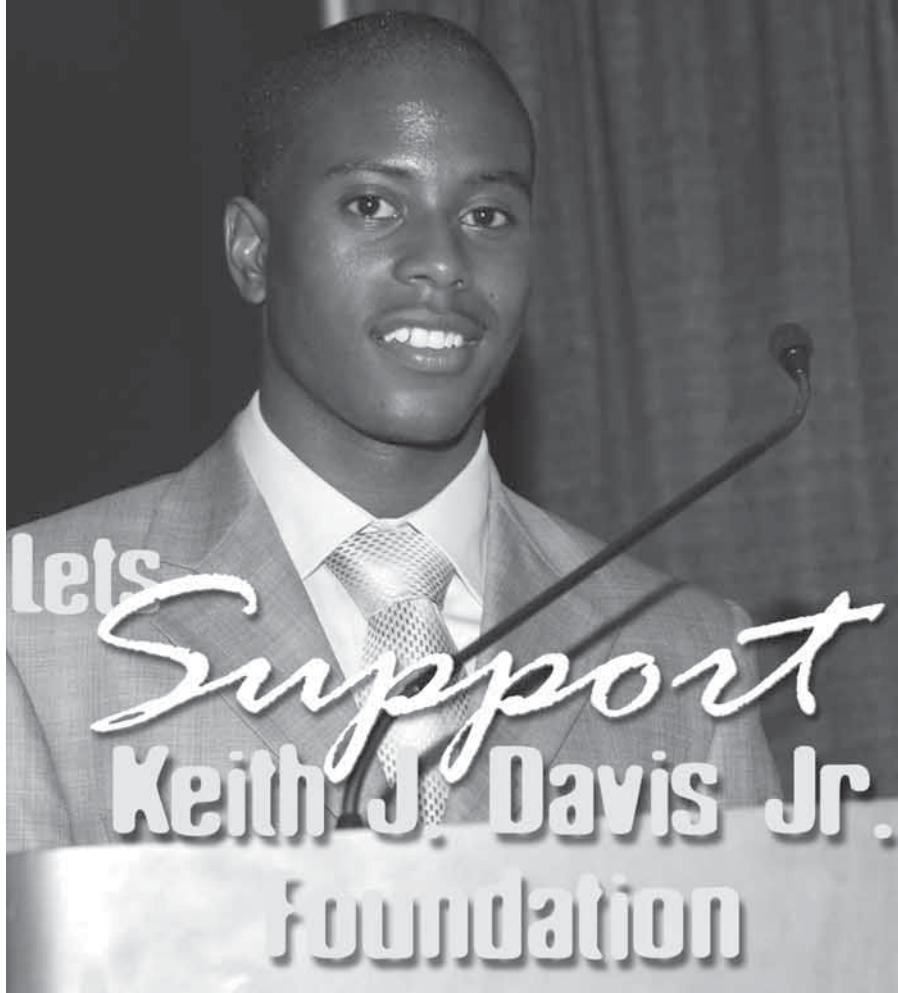
The Green Magazine's Executive Leadership Series offers unparalleled networking and development opportunities for entrepreneurs, philanthropists, execs and, of course, golfers. Each event features a clinic that highlights the keys to maximizing business opportunities on the course, several rounds of golf, the 19th Hole reception at the LEVEL Lounge, and extemporaneous forums focused on the inner workings of business. Needless to say, a delicate blend of competition and camaraderie is the trademark of the series.

Future stops on the Executive Leadership Series include Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Chicago, with each targeting approximately 150 of the region's best and brightest. So come out and join us, but bear in mind that The Green Magazine family is a breed apart. Our social commitments extend far beyond the course. On May 13, 2006 over 100 youth from public schools in the Bronx and Harlem, NYC made their way to Central Park's East Meadow to make history at The Green Magazine's First Annual Youth Clinic, a day of

golf, inspiration, and scholarship awards—the first event of its kind in the park's 150-year history. Thanks to the incredible support of NYS Senator David Paterson this event proved to be a wonderful opportunity to expose our youth to the game of golf and celebrate their victories.

Along with our regional outreach efforts, The Green Magazine strives to advance an appreciation of art, culture, and entrepreneurship among communities of color—nationwide and abroad. The game of golf serves as a means to open doors to the high-stakes world of finance and an affluent lifestyle beyond the pale of the average American. At all of our events, from upscale art galleries in the Midwest to the windswept courses of the Dominican Republic, The Green Magazine places the art of the deal front and center. It is through this approach that The Green looks forward to continuing a legacy of empowerment, cultural sophistication and sportsmanship, on and off the links.





Hi I am Keith J. Davis Jr. the founder of the Keith J. Davis Jr. Foundation, which was organized to inspire, inform, and educate youth, teens and young adults. In my opinion, to be successful, you sometimes have to start young. With this in mind, I organized the foundation in an effort to teach youth, teens and young adults. One of the main functions of the foundation is to showcase young aspiring entrepreneurs.

Our latest function was the Houston Black Expo at the George R. Brown convention center May 20, 2006. At this event, the foundation brought in an organized panel of teens and young adults. The panel consisted of: Lil Xavier, a gospel rapper, Erwin Nicholas, Freshman Vice President of NAACP Chapter at Texas Southern University, and Elon Lockings, leader of the Political cheerleaders. Each of these community entrepreneur leaders was eager to share their experiences in the arena of entrepreneurship. As the panel shared their experiences, a heartfelt passion and excitement could be felt exuding through the crowd.

After the panel had finished sharing their various experiences there was still so much excitement in the air that I decided to start gathering other youth, teens and young adults to help me promote the foundation. To my surprise business owners, shoppers and sponsors were willing to give liberal donations to a most noteworthy cause. I am happy to say we were quite successful.

While going around the convention center informing business owners, shoppers and sponsors about what we do, we were inspired, informed and educated as we observed more established entrepreneurs in action.

*Keith J. Davis Jr.
Keith J. Davis Jr. Foundation*

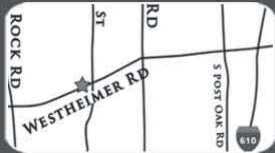


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