2 successful businessmen

Clay, Douglass setting the pace

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

Two local businessmen have made giant steps in economic development both in their own businesses as well as increasing and aiding other minority enterprises.

These entrepreneurs have ventured into areas traditionally held by white owners and have served as models to those who felt that blacks could not go into non-traditional businesses.

Robert Clay, owner of a contracting company, is also the chairman of the Minority Contractors Association. This association, which was founded by Clay in 1970, has more than 100 members and serves as an agent to seek, find and obtain contracts for black business people.

Clay points out that the group was instrumental in getting the state to set regulations that at least 10 percent of state contracts must go to minority businesses.

"That 10 percent didn't come easy. We raised a lot of hell to get, but we did what we had to do," explained Clay.

Clay, whose father had a small construction business, says he didn't sit down and plan to go into the construction business. "It was a mere accident.

"But I needed additional money and when in doubt, you do what comes naturally." Clay had learned the business by working during the summer for his father.

He states that he used his father's equipment which "broke as soon as I used it."

This prompted Clay to invest money into repairing the broken equipment and buying additional machinery which led him to the successful business he maintains today.

Despite his successes, he continued to push and assist other entrepreneurs who are starting off in the business.

As of 1978, Clay's business, which has been in operation since 1967, reported assets of over $2 million.

However, he points out, "A fool and his money will soon part."

He explained by saying that in order to operate a successful business, you must know the business and be willing to spend the time to develop it.

"As far as economic development is concerned, we are not where we should be.

"There is some economic growth, but there are more of us in business and with the little opportunities that are available, profits for blacks are not very much right now."

Another entrepreneur who has pushed for the cause of minority business is Sen. Robert Douglass who heads Baltimore Electronics Company.

GOVERNOR'S AWARD was recently presented to Robert Clay who founded the Minority Contractors Association for championing the causes of minority businesses. Making the presentations are Sen. Clarence Mitchell and Lt. Gov. Sam Bogley.

Douglass began his business in April 1968 after working as an engineer for the Bendix Corporation and IBM, ventured in the manufacturing business, which is considered a non-traditional area for black entrepreneurs.

He admits that starting was difficult. "I had to put together a very extensive business plan which required doing research on products and the market."

Douglass and his partner were able to get $32,000 in private funds along with a Small Business Administration 90 percent guaranteed loan to start the electronics firm.

Robert Douglass

Baltimore Electronics manufactures communications equipment which is sold to the government, both domestic and foreign. Last year's sales reached $3.6 million compared to the $175,000 made in 1968 when the company first started.

"A lot of work has been done since I went into the business," stated the 45th District senator who has introduced several pieces of legislation aimed at increasing the city and state use of minority businesses.

"Blacks have been making great efforts to make sure they're included in this development. There is, however, a need for good additional minority contractors who can produce quality products.

"There is definitely room in the marketplace for them."

—Urban League

(Continued from Page 23)

competition for available jobs.

Recognizing this trend, the department instituted employment workshops during 1978. Entitled, "Preparation for Employment," these workshops are designed to enhance individuals' techniques in seeking employment. Personnel representatives from area corporations conduct the two - hour sessions which are held at the Urban League offices.

The sessions are open to all persons who are seeking a position and feel that they want to brush up on their job search skills. Since the workshops are conducted by the same persons who also interview prospective employees, clients have an opportunity to meet and talk with the representatives without the pressure of being in an interview setting.

Personnel representatives were impressed by the interest of the workshop participants and hopefully learned that not everyone fully understands the importance of effective communication skills, resume preparation and appearance.

As a result of "Preparation for Employment," the department received more job notices from participating personnel representatives.

High unemployment continues to plague our community, particularly blacks. On overall unemployment, Dr. Robert Hill, director of the National Urban League's Research Department, stated in the 1978 NUL State of Black America: "Even according to the official Labor Department count, unemployment failed to decline among blacks as it had among whites over the past year."

Dr. Hill further stated: "Although official unemployment eased down among blacks from 13.1 to 12.3 percent during 1978, it fell more sharply among whites from 6.2 to 5.4 percent."

Local figures published by the Research and Analysis Division of the Maryland Department of Human Resources covering a period from January to October 1978, listed unemployment figures in Baltimore City ranging from 5.8 to 9.2 percent.

However, these figures include rather than isolate black unemployment in the city. Based on the national figures, it is logical to assume that black unemployment in Baltimore City ranges from 10 to 18 percent for black adults and 40 to 50 percent for teenage blacks.

The private and public job markets continue to get tighter. Area private employers are making an effort to provide equal opportunity in their hiring practices. In the same light, labor force expansion which is needed to decrease unemployment is not taking place as a result of the dismal economic condition of the nation.

This leaves very few options for the hard core unemployed who possess fewer job skills as well as lower levels of education. Therfore, the department refers persons to area training programs whenever possible so that they can be eleigible for various employment opportunities. Staff will continue to investigate other areas of possible employment opportunities during the coming year.

For 1978, the department served a total of 1213 persons and placed 117 persons. When calculated on a yearly basis, these placements generated over a half million dollars back into the economy.

There are no overnight solutions to the problems of unemployment, inadequate housing, escalating cost of health services and a lack of quality education.

Just as important are the problems faced by our youth which demand immediate attention and relief, and it is our belief that these problems can be solved with the implementation of programs on both the local and national levels.

Park West center offers health services

The Park West Health Center, Inc. is a community health care facility incorporated in 1972 to provide the residents of Northwest Baltimore with a means to plan and provide for their own health care needs.

Formerly, Northwest Health Services, Inc., the Board of Directors of Park West Health Center is composed of residents of the Northwest area, representatives of various community groups and social or service agencies, as well as representatives of other local health care providers including Sinai Hospital, Provident Hospital and the Baltimore City Health Department.

In cooperation with the Baltimore City Health Department, Park West Health Center, Inc. currently operates in the lower level of The Pimlico Multi - Purpose Center, 3319 W. Belvedere Ave.

The center presently offers Adult Medicine, Pediatric Services, Ob - Gyn, Dental Services, Podiatry and Family Planning to all residents of the Park Heights - Pimlico region of Baltimore City.

Residents are currently using the approximately 9,000 square feet of space at a rate of 1000 - 1100 patient visits per month.

A Geriatric Center operated by Park West Health Center is located in the Bel - Park Tower high rise for the elderly at 3800 W. Belvedere Ave.

This satellite center offers general medical, optometry, podiatry and dental services.

It is the intent of Park West Health Center, Inc. to provide comprehensive medical care for all the residents of the Park Heights - Pimlico area.

The next step in that plan is the development of a second satellite to be located in the lower Park Heights Multi - Purpose Center at Reisterstown Road and Keyworth Avenue.

Approximately 5500 sq. ft. will be used to expand the services presently offered at the other centers. One main addition at this location will be an in - house pharmacy.

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Teddy Bear was there!

Music is still big business in B'more as Pendergrass packs Civic Center.

'Only you...' 'Come on over to my place...' 'Close the door...' 'Turn off the lights...'

HIS GREATEST HITS — AFRO photographer Mark Gail catches soul superstar Teddy Pendergrass as he belted out his top tunes from Civic Center last Saturday. Some 10,000 fans packed downtown entertainment center.

Raindrops kept falling on our AFRAM

But weather did not deter some 250,000 Baltimoreans from attending festival of black life.

RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY — Scattered showers could not deter the 250,000 Baltimoreans who packed the Inner Harbor at AFRAM Expo '79. The festival featured cultural exhibits, live entertainment and African food. In the photo at right, three people keep dry under a blanket and dodge raindrops and traffic on South Charles Street at Lee.

OK, WHERE'S THE SUN? — Tiffany Owens, 2, and Eloni Owens, 3, stay dry under their umbrella at AFRAM Expo '79.

COCA-COLA MERCHANDIZING "BLITZ" TEAM — Executives from Coca-Cola will be visiting Baltimore City dealers to increase the distribution of all products of the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Baltimore. Special emphasis will be given to the placement of the [illegible] of the "Blitz" marketing team are: Vernon Greer, Wilmington, Del.; Reddrick Martin, Atlanta, Ga.; Harold Stone, Mid-East area; Lucas M. Hicks, Baltimore, and Eugene McCullers, Eastern area special markets manager, New York (L to R).

Annapolis planning director wins 'outstanding man' honor

Fred L. Greene, 29, has distinguished himself as a pioneer in the field of planning and zoning since his appointment as the director of Planning and Zoning for the city of Annapolis in March 1976.

Last year he was chosen as the Outstanding Young Man of America by the Outstanding Young Men of America organization, endorsed by the U.S. Jaycees.

Achievements on which the award was based included Greene's past recognition as Planner of the Year in 1974 by the American Institute of Planners his service as a vice - chairman of the Anne Arundel County Overall Economic Development Committee, a position he now holds, his membership on the executive committee, of the board of directors of the American Institute of Planners since 1971, and for his achievements in his present job.

Greene was responsible for obtaining $1.5 million for a multi - purpose facility in Annapolis, $2 million for miscellaneous projects, and $1.7 million from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to be used to phase out the urban renewal program in the Annapolis area.

A native of Natchez, Miss., Greene holds a B.C. degree in political science and business from Tuskegee Institute, a Master's degree in social work, and a Master's degree in planning, both from the University of Maryland.

He is married to the former Ethel Robinson of Tuskegee, Ala., a teacher in the public schools in Anne Arundel County. They are the parents of two

PAY SPECIALIST

Spec. 4 James A. Smith, son of Mrs. Verna L. Smith, 1337 V St. S.E., recently was assigned as a pay specialist with the U.S. Army Garrison at [illegible]

SGT. ANTOINETTE YOUNG is shown receiving a citation from Leon Allen Jr., when she is a graduate of Douglass High School and is now stationed in California. Sgt. YOUNG IS THE DAUHTER OF M[illegible]