Just Burgers uses mama's receipe

By Portia E. Redham
AFRO Staff Writer

Take mama's home-style recipe, add the new commercial complex in downtown Baltimore and sprinkle in two black entrepreneurs and what have you got ..... Just Burgers, one of the newest eating establishments in Harborplace.

Just Burgers, owned by Michael Butler, 31 and Thomas Goines, 32, offers just that...burgers, in several varieties ranging from a plain burger to a burger with egg and cheese.

The food place, one of 18 black-owned businesses in Harborplace, is the first business venture for the two entrepreneurs who began plans for the operation two years ago when they first learned of the Rouse Company project.

Butler and Goines were involved with 11 other people who prepared a business package for the Rouse Company for a 150-seat cafe. By this year, the concept had evolved to a hamburger establishment and the group had narrowed down to Goines and Butler.

"While we were working on the idea of a food place in Harborplace, the Rouse Company suggested that we consider being the only hamburger establishment.

"The cafe idea is still alive and very dear to us," said Butler who left the C & P Telephone Company as an equal employment officer to supervise his business on a full time basis.

Butler, originally from St. Mary's County, Md., met Goines while attending Morgan State University. Goines, who is the executive director of the National Banking Association in Washington, D.C. is originally from Columbia, S.C. Prior to his present position, he worked with Rep. Parren Mitchell on the House Banking Committee.

"I think this is extraordinary that two guys with relatively limited experience in fast foods have gotten a product and are having success selling it," said Goines.

"But as professional and confident as we were this would not have been possible without the political clout in the economic community with the help of people like Parren Mitchell and Clarence 'Du' Burns.

The owners received a guaranteed Small Business Administration loan and matched it with personal financing, totaling nearly $150,000 to open the 550 square foot operation that is located on the second level of the Light Street Pavilion.

Plans are already underway to expand the menu which includes burgers as well as drinks, milk shakes and taters (french fried potatoes). By September, several new items will be added including vege-burger, teriyaki burger, blue cheese burger, Mexi-burger and a Bermuda burger.

The business employs 15 people who work on a part-time basis with one full time assistant.

When asked whether he felt the crowds at Harborplace would continue Butler stated, "I very honestly think people will continue to come downtown to Harborplace.

"This is a special place where all people, colors, ages, and sizes can come have fun and eat themselves to death."

Reflecting on the first day Harborplace opened, Butler states that the owners never had any hesitation about whether Just Burgers would work. "Our only fear was running out of ground beef," he said.

More than 6,000 hamburgers are made each week from fresh ground beef that is delivered each morning. The recipes used for the burgers, Butler reports are his mother's family recipes.

Goines and Butler are now working on plans to open the café they originally considered and Butler reports that the business is scheduled to open in 1982.

"Black economic development is probably on the horizon and is taking off into something unmatched by anything in this country," pointed out Butler.

"We're on a growth curve and it's just beginning to happen for black businesses. There are many opportunities that may not be available in the next decade," added Goines.

"If we don't take advantage of them in this decade, they'll be lost forever."

HMMMMM GOOD — Michael Butler, owner, dons cap and apron to help prepare hamburgers for Just Burgers which is the only hamburger establishment in Harborplace.

AFRO Photos by Mark Gail

HHS program to aid elderly

Senior citizens facing decisions about buying private health insurance to supplement Medicare will soon be able to get help from volunteers trained in a nationwide program begun recently by the Department of Health and Human Services.

An informational pamphlet, developed by HHS Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) and the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, entitled "Guide to Health Insurance for People with Medicare" is available from HCFA regional and Social Security offices and from state insurance departments.

Further information about the program can be obtained for regional offices of HCFA.

Harborplace receives HUD minority business award

Harborplace Limited Partnership, an affiliate of the Rouse Company, is a recipient of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Developments Minority Contractors Utilization Award.

The award is given in recognition of the company's superior efforts to promote the use of minority entrepreneurs in the construction and operation of Harborplace.

Harborplace, a privately funded development of shops and restaurants on Urban Renewal land located in the Inner Harbor area of Baltimore, officially opened its doors July 2.

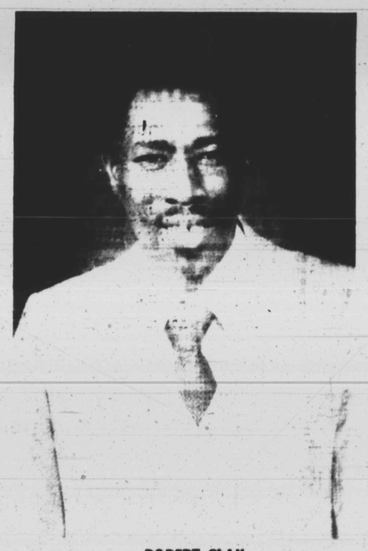
HUD Regional Administrator Thomas C. Maloney made the presentation to Mathias J. DeVito, president and chief executive officer of the Rouse Company at a ceremony at Harborplace July 29.

Participating in the award ceremony was Mayor William Donald Schaefer.

Maloney said, Harborplace Limited Partnership put forth extraordinary efforts to facilitate the recruitment and utilization of the skills of minorities as subcontractors in the construction of Harborplace. But equally significant were the innovative ways employed by the partnership to encourage minority owned and operated businesses to lease space in the project.

(Continued on page 5)

NEWEST PLACE IN TOWN — Harborplace located in the Inner Harbor includes 22 minority-owned businesses of which 18 are black-owned.



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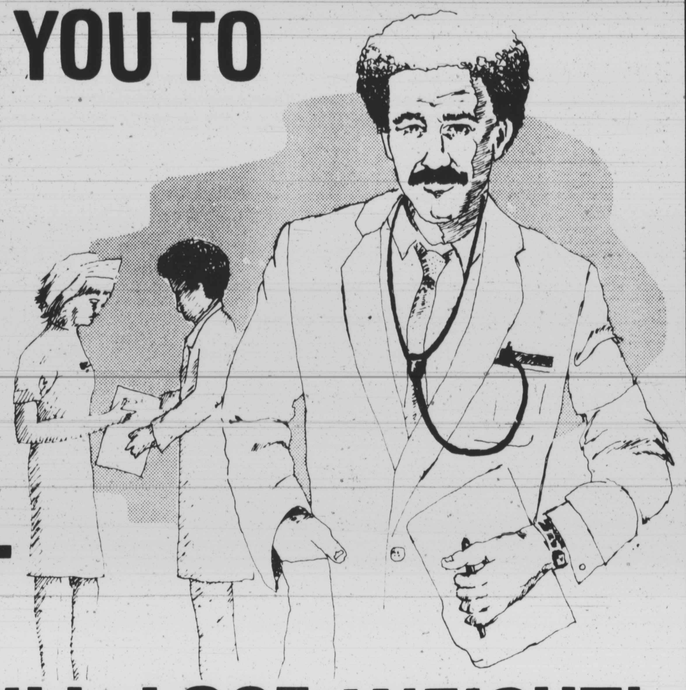

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