MONTGOMERY WARD

At Montgomery Wards we are proud of the growth of our employees and that our Affirmative Action programs have continued to produce many opportunities for Blacks, Women and other minorities for the past number of years. The talent, dedication and expertise that our employees bring to their jobs is available. We are constantly aware of the contributions they make to our stores and to the communities we serve. We salute their progress and encourage it.

Opportunity is Yours at Wards

MONTGOMERY WARD

ANNAPOLIS 224-2500 ANNAPOLIS MALL

BALTIMORE 244-2000 S. MONROE AT WASH. BLVD.

BEL AIR 838-2500 HARFORD MALL

CATONSVILLE 244-2399 RT. 40 W. AT ROLLING RD.

GLEN BURNIE 761-6000 GLEN BURNIE MALL

ROSEDALE 574-6500 GOLDEN RING MALL 6400 ROSSVILLE BLVD.

ELLICOTT CITY 465-6750 RT. 40 W. AT RT. 29

TOWSON 828-9600 EUDOWOOD SHOPPING PLAZA

ESSEX 687-9300 MIDDLESEX SHOPPING CENTER

Walbrook Plaza is first black-owned shopping center

WALBROOK PLAZA — The first black-owned shopping center in Baltimore officially opened May 11 and includes such businesses as insurance, clothing, food and shoes.

AFRO Photos by Mark Gail

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

What was once empty buildings and land in Walbrook Junction in West Baltimore has become a thriving retail complex and commercial center.

This area, Walbrook Plaza shopping center, developed by the prominent physicians, Shirley R. Clinton and H. Garland Chissell, is the first black-owned center in Baltimore.

Official grand opening ceremonies for the $2.7 million complex were held in May. Among those businesses open in the center are Chicken George fast food restaurant, Shoe World, Maryland Auto Insurance, Brown's Supermarket, McDonald's, Hair Bazaar, Subway Sandwich Shop, Automated Laundry and Fashion World.

In 1974 the doctors purchased the Urn and Griddle at the corner of Clifton avenue and Edgewood street along with the lot behind it and planned to redesign the store as a seafood restaurant.

It was at this time that the idea came to light to buy additional property in the area and convert the block into a shopping center. By 1977 the entire block had been purchased down to the Garrison Lounge.

While most of the funding came out of the doctors' own pockets, the Department of Housing and Community Development offered assistance and aided the project with over $1 million in block grant funds. First American Bank provided additional capital.

Having developed and worked with the Garwyn Medical Center and the Monumental Health Maintenance Organization, both doctors had a feel for business but the retail business was a brand new ballgame.

Determined to learn all they could about shopping centers, they packed their bags and headed for Fort Lauderdale, Fla. to attend a three-day shopping center school under the program of New York University.

Clinton and Chissell were the only two blacks in the class which explored the entire development and operation process.

"Our motivating factor for building the shopping center was to provide better access for shopping within the community and increase job opportunities," said Dr. Clinton who noted that more than 300 people will be employed at the facility.

"Blacks need to be involved in the retail development in the community," pointed out Chissell. "We feel by setting this example we can encourage other blacks to start their own businesses. This will keep the money in the community.

"Everybody sells to blacks but blacks don't sell to themselves except in food establishments. We need more diversified outlets."

Clinton and Chissell have made a major impact on the Walbrook area with the shopping center but they have been involved in other projects that afected the community.

In 1967 Clinton, along with three other doctors, began plans for the Garwyn Medical Center which opened at Garrison Blvd. and Gwynns Falls Parkway in 1969.

The following year Clinton joined with Chissell to expand his Monumental Health Association which was a professional association comprised of doctors. Together they planned to expand the organization to provide medical service for people in the city and signed a contract with the state to offer the services to state employees.

However, the state required that the organization be a health maintenance organization with a prepaid plan and in June 1975 a non-profit organization was formed and known as the Monumental Health Plan.

This health organization located in the Garwyn Medical Center serves more than 6,500 people with various health services. It has expanded to seven centers throughout the city.

Both doctors have used their expertis to work as consultants in development projects in other cities. They participated in the planning of West Broadway Business and Medical Center in Louisville, Ky.

"I don't think black economic development is where it should be," stated Chissell. "Blacks should be more favorably into the economic mainstream."

OWNERS-DEVELOPERS — Drs. H. Garland Chissell and Shirley R. Clinton, both physicians at Garwyn Medical Center, bought property in the 3400 block Clifton Ave. and built the first black-owned retail complex in Baltimore.

Chicken George to open in other cities

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

The Chicken George fast food restaurant, a black-owned firm in the Mondawmin Mall is the highest grossing single chicken outlet in the country, according to Ted Holmes, president of Atlantic Personnel Service, which owns the company.

"We're doing extremely great," stated Holmes. "We're doing three times as well as we expected."

Since the Mondawmin location opened in the Mondawmin Mall in November 1979, long lines of eager customers, ready to sample the spicy chicken has kept the restaurant busy and always crowded.

To help alleviate the lines and long waits, additional counter space was added by removing the seating area in the front of the restaurant. This was needed after only two weeks of operation.

The second location opened in June in the Walbrook Plaza shopping center and Holmes reports that the company will expand to other cities with a new location set to open soon in Chicago, Ill.

By the end of September, two locations will open in Norfolk, Va. and negotiations are underway for three facilities in Washington, D.C., one in Philadelphia, Pa. and four in Baltimore.

The menu at Chicken George includes plain or spicy chicken with spicy rice, crunchy french fries, spicy greens, corn on the cob, chicken salad, Louisiana gumbo, fish and homemade biscuits. Pork has been omitted from the menu and the food is flavored with beef.

A breakfast menu was recently added which includes plain or spicy sausage, eggs, cheese, biscuits, coffee, tea and daily fresh squeezed orange juice. Breakfast is served from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Holmes stated that the company looked into the possibilities of a fast food restaurant in the Baltimore area because of its large black community. More than a year was spent developing the recipes which were tested in Baltimore, Chicago and Atlanta.

NEWEST LOCATION — Chicken George fast food restaurant, specializing in spicy fried chicken, opened its second location in June at the Walbrook Plaza Shopping Center. The first location opened in Mondawmin Mall last year.

First black Subway franchise in country

The first black-owned franchise in the Subway Submarine Sandwich shop chain in the country was opened by four Baltimoreans in 1976 at St. Paul and 25th Streets.

The second location is among several stores opening in Walbrook Plaza.

All four owners are former employees with the Baltimore City Department of Planning and include Michael and Carolyn Gaines, C. Yvonne Holt, Raymond A. Skinner and Harvey D. Carter.

Gaines, owner and manager of the Walbrook location stated that the owners prefer opening locations in the black community. "We feel merchants are needed who care and work in the community. Rather than take dollars out of the community you need businesses that will put money back into the community through purchases and employment."

He added, "I feel that if black people can work together as a group black economic development can flourish. Where you have a population that is 47 to 50 percent black, that's a tremendous market.

"Blacks supporting other black businesses is an economic situation that is a great catalyst. Without this effort there can be no real black economic development."

Subway specializes in hot and cold submarine sandwiches of all varieties, featuring Alaskan King Crab salad and the "BMT, the biggest, meatiest and tastiest cold cut in the world."

The Subway Submarine Sandwich Shop franchise is headquartered in Connecticut with locations primarily located along the northeast section of the country.

SANDWICH MAKING — Owner and manager, Michael Gaines, of the Walbrook Plaza Subway Submarine Sandwich Shop instructs an employee in the art of making one of the several varieties of foot long sandwiches available at the food place.

INSURANCE TEAM — The brokers at Maryland Auto Insurance Agency are (L to R) Eugene Cross, who is the owner, Denise Dorsey and Joseph Patti.

Md. Auto offers all types of coverage

Maryland Auto Insurance provides all forms of insurance and specializes in auto, truck and motorcycle coverage.

The agency was incorporated in 1971 with the first office located at 2300 W. North Ave. It has since moved to 4670 York Road and to the newest location in Walbrook Plaza.

Maryland Auto is a privately owned business and is not affiliated with the state of Maryland. The owner, Eugene Cross, has been in the insurance business for 22 years and has spent most of that time working in the black community.

The hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursdays and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Working at the new location are Joseph Patti and Danise Dorsey.

Ms. Dorsey is one of the youngest black female insurance brokers in Baltimore.

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