LUXURIOUS WORLD

Have you ever pictured yourself wrapped up in a soft, luxurious fur? James McQuay is one of the few black men in this country who can help you realize your fur fantasies!

How did a ghetto youth growing up in Yonkers, N.Y. become the only black fur manufacturer with an address on N.Y.C.'s 7th Ave.—in the heart of the fur wholesale district?

Says James, "It wasn't easy! My mother spent quite a few years working for a white family, and I used to help her out. When I realized that their dog ate better than we did, I was determined to work for myself one day!"

At 14, James began doing odd jobs for a Yonkers furrier, and he stayed to learn the business, literally, from the ground up—he began by sweeping floors—and eventually learned how to pick the best skins, cut, and sew them into a quality garment.

He had learned his trade well, but was none the less, denied entry to the all-white fur operator's union.

Undaunted, he opened his own shop with little less than $500 he had managed to save. "I would walk around my storefront from 9 to 5; all dressed up in a suit and tie, trying to look respectable. Nobody trusted me to work on their coats overnight!"

"If a person stopped in who wanted repairs or alterations done, I had to finish it in one day, because they thought I was going to skip town with their coat!"

"I loaded milk crates at night to pay the rent; because I wasn't making any money with my business." McQuay laughingly remembered the early years.

A Scorpio, who comes on even stronger after a momentary defeat or setback, McQuay advises young blacks to do the same.

Today, Bill Cosby and Jayne Kennedy are among his customers; he even does fashion shows for some of the most prestigious groups in the country such as the Congressional Black Caucus.

McQuay has "made it," despite his insistence on billing himself as the black furrier. It is an epithet bound to turn off whites and blacks, who unfortunately seem to believe that black businessmen offer inferior merchandise and service.

McQuay expressed this point of view. "I refuse to forget where I come from and my humble beginnings. I offer quality garments that I can guarantee, but I refuse to compromise on who and what I am."

Commenting on this season's fur fashions, McQuay says, "Today, any working woman can own some kind of fur. Even the smallest touch of fur, such as a boa or fling, can turn an ordinary looking outfit into an exciting fashion statement. Conservative business suits become glamorous and sophisticated with the addition of fur. Tails, whether fox, mink or raccoon, are great additions to any sporty outfit."

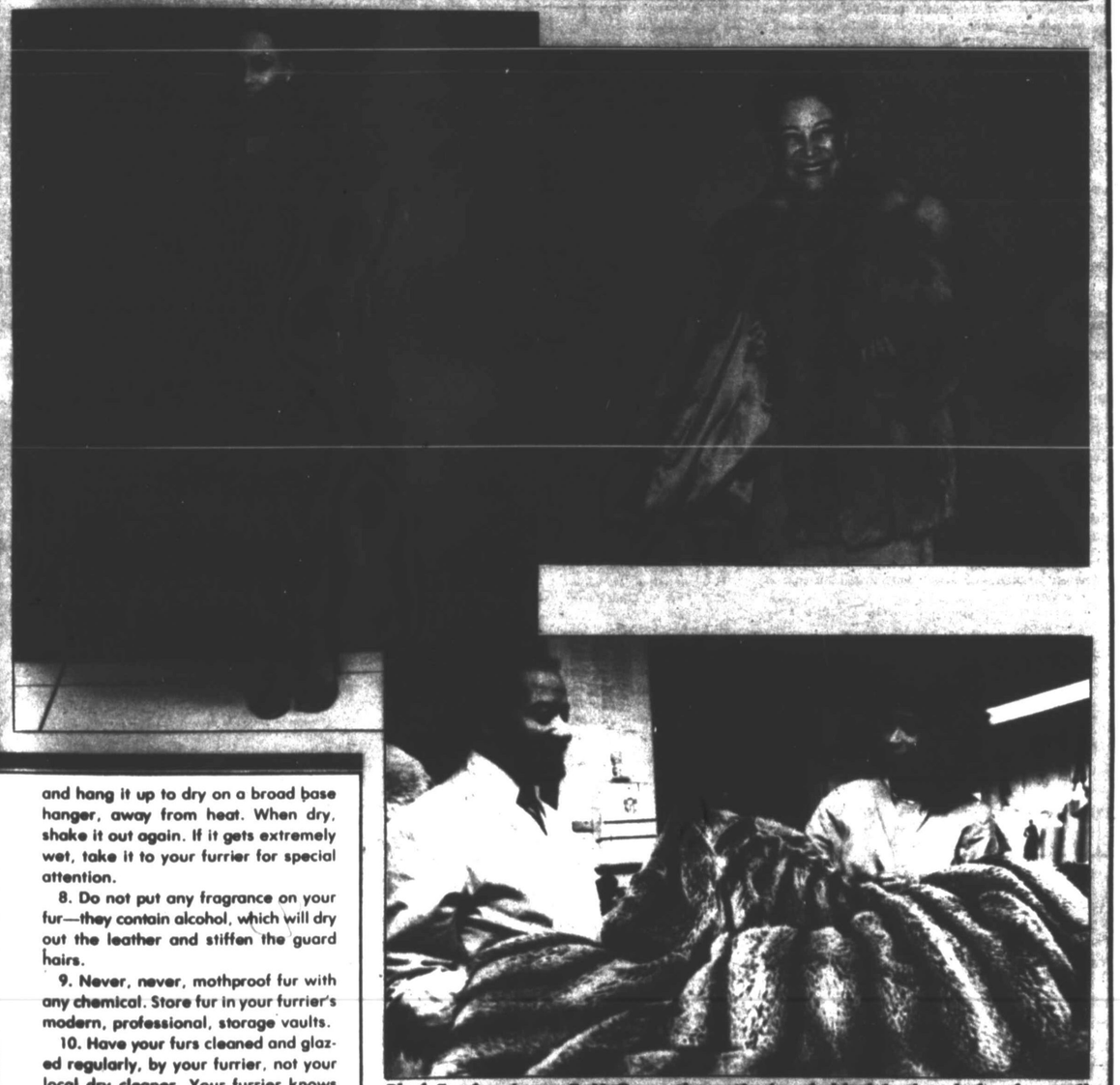
"Fur has become increasingly sporty. Styles have been created for every day wear. Woven or plaited mink, combined with wool, knit or leather, results in an interesting texture that is sporty enough to wear anytime."

McQuay added "Full-length ranch mink is and always will be number 1 in style as well as type of fur. It is one of the loveliest and most durable of furs. The street length coat is also a classic."

"Other popular furs are raccoon, coyote, red and blue fox, and shed beaver. Jackets have become more popular and many people are turning their old coats into jackets.

For those who already own fur, McQuay has a few helpful hints on their care:

1. Always hang your fur on a broad hanger. Make sure the fur is not crushed in the closet.
2. Never comb or brush your fur.
3. Do not place your fur in a plastic bag. Plastic will cause it to dry out.
4. Always keep your fur away from heat, it will cause the fur and leather to dry out.
5. Do not pin jewelry on your fur.
6. Do not repair rips or tears yourself; take them to your furrier, who has special equipment to secure it properly.
7. If your fur gets wet, shake it out and hang it up to dry on a broad base hanger, away from heat. When dry, shake it out again. If it gets extremely wet, take it to your furrier for special attention.
8. Do not put any fragrance on your fur—they contain alcohol, which will dry out the leather and stiffen the guard hairs.
9. Never, never, mothproof fur with any chemical. Store fur in your furrier's modern, professional, storage vaults.
10. Have your furs cleaned and glazed regularly, by your furrier, not your local dry cleaner. Your furrier knows how to remove dirt. His process will keep the leather soft, and bring back the furs original luster—thereby prolonging your garment's life.



Black Furrier, James P. McQuay, the nation's only black in the wholesale-retail fur manufacturing business, and his customer, Susan Gibel, examine a sample of the many fur coats, stoles or jackets, ranging in price from $3,000. to $10,000. that are available from his firm, located at 30th Street and 7th Avenue, New York City.