'Profiles on Africa' dazzles

By Alisa Samuels

If Ifa Orunmila, the African God of destiny and father of secrets, could have verbalized his thoughts on WEAA FM-88.9's African celebration last Thursday, he probably would have called it a success.

The wooded African sculpture sat on the stage as William Benjamin, host of WEAA's popular two-way talk show "Profiles on Africa," emceed the show's second anniversary celebration from the Joseph Meyerhoff Auditorium in the Baltimore Museum of Art.

Over 200 people filled the auditorium Nov. 10 and were bedazzled with an African international fashion show and conversation on African and Afro-American relations.

The colorful, free-flowing and fashionable clothes the models wore are routinely worn in Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa.

"We can be beautiful when we want to and we are," said Nalunga Sayyed, the fashion show's narrator, as the 13 American and African models rhythmically moved across the stage to the beats of the percussions.

"Profiles on Africa" aired in Nov. 1986 on Morgan State University's radio station WEAA-FM 88.9. Brenda Pridgen, who hosted the show's parent "Two-Way Talk," invited Benjamin to assist her.

Benjamin suggested "Profiles on Africa" as a trial series for Pridgen's talk show program and it has endured ever since.

The Monday night show discusses African geography and social and political issues facing many African nations.

In the past, programs aired included "AIDS in Africa: Disease or Design, Fact or Fiction," "The African Presence on the Americas" and "The Celebration of Kwanzaa".

Benjamin, a former Fulbright Scholar to the United Republic of Cameroon and a Morgan State graduate, said he never expected the show to become as popular.

"I never imagined it," Benjamin said later on. "But people nowadays know there is a cultural need for survival."

The talk show has over 300 listeners Benjamin said.

During the celebration, Benjamin, 34, interviewed Dr. Joseph Nkwanyuo, a medical doctor at Maryland General Hospital, in a radio talk show format, complete with commercial breaks and information.

The two men sat on the stage discussing social and cultural problems between Africans and Afro-Americans and some remedies.

"There are a lot of misconceptions about Africa and a lot of misconceptions about Americans of African origin," said Dr. Nkwanyuo during the beginning of the show.

Many blacks in America believe Africa is still the uncivilized Dark Continent Nkwanyuo said.

"I remember when I came to the United States 10 years ago....I was very disheartened," Dr. Nkwanyuo said. He is from Cameroon, an African nation located between west and central Africa.

The doctor said he recalled Afro-Americans' cold treatment toward him back then.

Many American blacks resent Africans and foreign blacks for not participating in the North American slave experience and are "taken aback by their language" said Nkwanyuo.

In Africa, Africans treat American visitors, particularly Afro-Americans, warmly and friendly said Nkwanyuo.

"Most Americans who have travelled in Africa know as soon as they show up in a cab in a village, half of the town will greet them," said Nkwanyuo.

Dr. Nkwanyuo, a graduate of the University of Cameroon, the University of London and the Johns Hopkins University, attempts to strengthen African-Afro-American ties by introducing Africans to the Baltimore community in his free time.

A lack of communication between Africans and Afro-Americans and the media's misrepresentation of Africa are two major factors that prolong African-Afro-American dissension Nkwanyuo said.

Pictures and stories are "not necessarily positive" things about Africa, such as South Africa's rigid apartheid system and the devastating famine in Ethiopia, are constantly shown on television or in newspapers Nkwanyuo said.

"We (the world) continue to believe Africa is one of the worse places on earth," Dr. Nkwanyuo said.

People do not see the buildings, villages and the people living in Africa. "We often hear of the tragedies in Africa and wonder if there is any hope."

Benjamin, who studied West Africa's culture and society as a Fulbright Scholar, said he never lets the media serve as his sole educational process.

Instead, he reads about Africa, talks to Africans and joins African organizations.

Dr. Sandye McIntyre, a former French professor at Morgan State, helped Benjamin receive a fellowship to study abroad.

Nkwanyuo said black colleges could do more to foster better understanding between Africans and Afro-Americans through books and audio-visuals.

"I don't think we necessarily have to take up African studies," said Nkwanyuo. "There is more information in the library."

The black community could do more also by developing community groups to share with Africans and traveling to Africa to experience the African culture directly said Nkwanyuo.

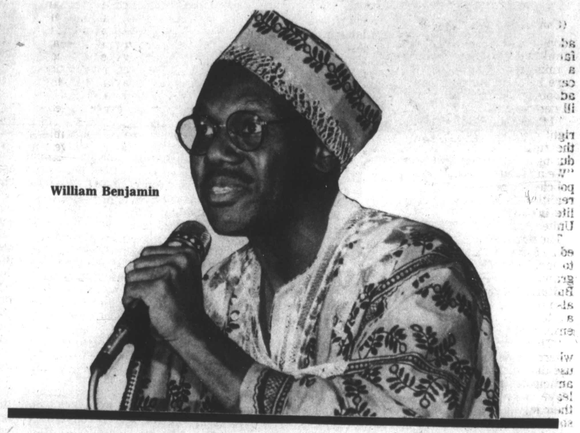
Mary Carter Smith, a local African folklorist, was scheduled to read folktales, but because the show fell behind schedule she did not.

Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke and the Baltimore City Council sent the station's general manager Barry Young resolutions proclaiming Nov. 10 as "Profiles on Africa Day" in the city.

U.S. Rep. Kweisi Mfume, Seventh District, and Gov. William D. Schaefer also sent resolutions to the station.

WEAA has approximately 72,000 listeners Young said.

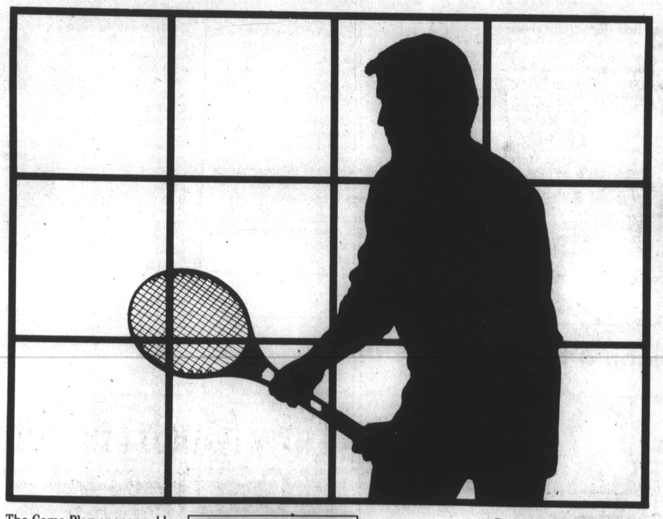
Listeners as far north as Pennsylvania and south as Springfield, Va. tune in to WEAA-FM the general manager said.



William Benjamin

HOMELAND ATTIRE — Sentimen "Santos" Lekgothoane, of South Africa.

A KNOCKOUT:—This model struts her stuff wearing a Sengalese dress and headband.



Life Planning Week #4
The Game Plan

Relax!

Are you getting the most out of your leisure time? Do you know how to relax? How does your game plan score on our test? Beginning Monday Channel 2 News Sports Anchor, Scott Garceau, shows you how to stay fit, relax and unwind by developing a plan that works for you.

All next week on Channel 2 News at 5, 6, & 11 pm

The Game Plan sponsored by FORD. Quality Products From Quality Dealers.

Brochures distributed by GIANT. THE QUALITY FOOD PEOPLE

Lifeplanning Series sponsored by RITZ CAMERA • EXPERT • PERSONAL • FRIENDLY • SERVICE

CIRCUIT CITY The Intelligent Choice

The Johns Hopkins Health Plan

Provident BANK OF MARYLAND Where Banking Comes To Life. Member FDIC

LIFE PLANNING 2 WMAR-TV

—Maternity leave

(Continued from Page A1)

adopt a new concept called family leave to allow workers a minimum of 16 weeks to care for their infants, newly adopted children or seriously ill dependents.

"I think this is a step in the right direction (referring to the report)," said Schmoke during the press conference. "We all need to review these policies and recognize the new realities in terms of family life in Baltimore and in the United States."

The commission, established by a city ordinance in 1983 to monitor policies and programs affecting women in Baltimore's workforce, has also suggested the city create a leave bank for city employees.

"This would be a bank where employees who do not use their sick leave or do not anticipate using their sick leave can deposit some of their leaves or spare leaves, so that other employees can use it when their sick leaves run out," Marquez, 39, said last Friday.

At a Work and Family Forum in April, many workers complained about the city's occasions-absence policy that aims to prevent leave abuse the women said.

The policy mandates no employee take more than seven absences during a 12 month period.

The commission said if an employee goes over the limit of absences, due to emergencies for example, he or she is subject to reprimand or disciplinary action. The commission for women would like that policy revised.

Many of the commission for women's recommendations, such as paternity leave, leave for sick dependents and a flexible benefits plan, already exist at the state level and in other major cities across the nation the report concluded.

The latter idea is often called the "cafeteria plan". The city would set benefits for employees "to pick and choose from a menu of available benefits" at no extra cost said Marquez.

"Baltimore lags somewhat behind the other major U.S. cities and some of the surrounding counties," in terms of its personnel policies said Eileen C. Sweeney, chairperson for the family-oriented personnel policies taskforce.

The commission's personnel policy report said all of the U.S. cities and five of the seven Maryland counties surveyed offered paternity leave and every Maryland county and city examined during the survey offered paid maternity leave.

Currently, Baltimore offers no paternity leave for a father to attend the birth of his child and the city has as a guideline only, a 10 week non-mandatory maternity leave, which is subject to the discretion of the departments' supervisors.

The commission discovered many women risk losing employment when they go on maternity leave in the city, although there is federal legislation that warrants maternity leave.

Under city policies, an expectant mother can take accrued personal vacation, unpaid sick leave and some unpaid leave for maternity leave. Accrued leave guarantees job reinstatement, but unpaid leave over 30 days does not in Baltimore Sweeney said.

"So if for some reason, a woman has already used part or all of her accrued time for legitimate reasons, such as being sick, and has to get in to the unpaid leave, if she takes more than 30 days there is no job guarantee at the end of her maternity leave," Sweeney explained during the press conference.

Sweeney said despite the fact women count for more than half of the city's employees, most of the personnel policies are based on the traditional workforce.

"The traditional workforce was the man going to work and the woman staying at home taking care of the family and home," said Sweeney.

The commission spent two years conducting research and interviews before it could make its recommendations. Former Mayor Clarence "Du" Burns assisted the group in its early stages of planning.

"What we're recommending is that the city reinvest in its human capital," said Marquez.

"After decades of investing in the physical infrastructure of the city, it seems that Baltimore needs to invest in its human capital to retain its competitiveness, not only in the building of the city, but competitiveness of its labor," continued Marquez.

Besides suggesting future personnel policies, the group has also suggested eliminating current policies.

The organization would like the city to end temporary employment.

The commission recommends temporary work only be used when necessary and not for the city, to avoid paying benefits to part time or full-time workers.

"We're not intending to point any fingers here. We think there are many well-meaning, sensitive supervisors in the city's workforce who are simply stuck with policies that lag behind the evolution of the workforce," said Marquez, commenting about her group's recommendations.

The mayor who said he saw a draft of the report, but had not yet read the complete report, said he would ask each agency head to review the commission's report and give him an in-depth response.

"Mayors take quite a gamble doing something like this, because generally you know its going to be somewhat critical of government, but if we're going to move forward, we have to take a critical look at some policies," Schmoke said about supporting the commission for women's report.

Schmoke said he was particularly interested in the labor and personnel departments' reactions to the commission's recommendations.

Some of the issues involve the administration responding unilaterally, but other issues would require negotiations with the unions and discussions with organized labor, public employees unions and non-unionized workers Schmoke said.

Richard Whalen, the city's labor commissioner, said Nov. 15 his department has not reviewed the report yet because its rather comprehensive.

Whalen disagreed with the commission's assertion that the city's leave policies were not family-oriented.

"I don't know the basis of how they drew their conclusions, but we certainly try to be family-oriented," Whalen said.

"We have a rather liberal leave policy," the labor commissioner said.

Whalen said his staff would thoroughly review the report and announce its response within a couple of weeks.

The new personnel director, Jesse E. Hoskins, who was appointed three weeks ago, is in the process of moving from Chicago, Ill. and he could not be reached for comment.

Hoskins is expected to assume his duties here Dec. 1 a personnel spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Marquez and Sweeney did not know how much the city would have to spend to implement the women commission's suggestions.

"Some of the recommendations have some cost involved, but we feel that this is a financial investment that can be offset dollar for dollar by increased productivity by the employees and by decreased cost of absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, low morale and efficiency of the employees," said Marquez.

Some of the local regions surveyed to complete the personnel policy report are Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

—Safer Schools

(Continued from Page A1)

Other suggestions include activities and programs which command parental and community involvement and provide support for teachers both in and out of school.

Many of the resolutions are general, but a few designate specific ideas. One suggestion is to utilizee historical events, such as Black History Month, to demonstrate problems and conflict that were resolved by peace instead of violence.

"Unity Day" is another suggestion. In conjunction with Martin Luther King's birthday, on Unity Day students would play basketball or another sport against the mayor and other celebrities Everyone in the community would be invited to attend the game and participate in a half-time presentation on the issue of violence in schools.

The final resolution is to appoint a permanent Safer Schools Committee to meet quarterly.

No sooner had the committee drafted its proposed resolutions to school violence, than did more brutal incidences obtrude two city high schools. Christopher Bell, a 15-year old 10th grader at Southern High School was attacked by a gang of 10 to 15 boys between of 16 and 18. After yelling, "Stupid white boy, let's get him," the boys threw the victim to the ground, beat him with fists and bottles, and kicked him, according to police spokeswoman, Arlene Jenkins.

Meanwhile, at Edmondson High School, 16-year old, Mark J. Boyd, reported being accosted by four boys on the staircase after leaving the cafeteria. Mark reported that one of the suepects pulled out a gun and demanded his money. The boys allegedly fled the scene when the bell rang.

Concerned not only with violence, but with "quality

(Continued on Page A8)

YIELD 7.17% RATE* 6.93% MONEY MARKET $50,000 Minimum Balance

YIELD 7.10% RATE* 6.80% MONEY MARKET $20,000 Minimum Balance

YIELD 6.18% RATE* 6.00% MONEY MARKET Under $20,000 Balance

YIELD 8.05% RATE** 7.74% 6-MONTH CD

YIELD 8.40% RATE** 8.07% 12-MONTH CD

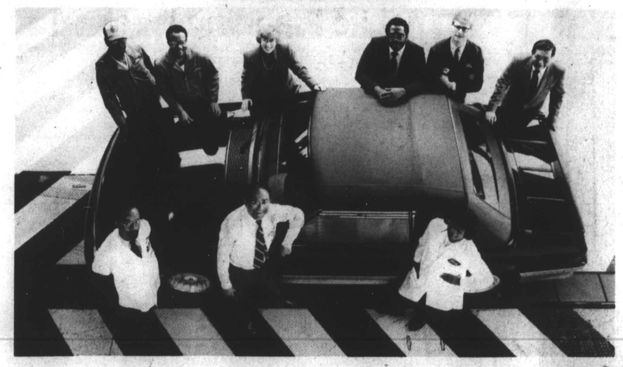
How Much Higher Can They Go?

Sitting on the sidelines waiting for a great rate to come along? Well, your wait is over with Provident Bank's Money Market and CD accounts. Because if you poke around these pages a bit, you'll see they top out among the best around. Doesn't that make it high time you stopped by your nearest Provident branch?

Provident BANK OF MARYLAND Where Banking Comes To Life. Member FDIC

*Rates subject to change without notice.
**Substantial penalty for early withdrawal.

Teamwork:



Profile in Quality #6: At Ford Motor Company we've all made a commitment to quality. And the results have been rewarding. Nationwide surveys have shown that for 8 years running, owners of Lincoln, Mercury and Ford cars and light trucks have reported fewer problems, on average, than owners of any other vehicles designed and built in North America.* This is another example of what happens when management and employees work together for a common goal. At Ford, that goal is quality.

FORD MERCURY LINCOLN

One more reason Ford Motor Company has designed and built the highest quality American cars and trucks for 8 years running.

Ford Quality is Job 1.

FORD • LINCOLN • MERCURY • FORD TRUCKS • FORD TRACTORS

Buckle up—Together we can save lives.
*Based on an average of owner-reported problems in a series of surveys of '81-'88 models designed and built in North America.