

# Blaylock says he is an example of progress

BY T. KEVIN WALKER  
THE CHRONICLE

Ronald Blaylock knows a thing or two about black history.

He has been writing and rewriting since starting Blaylock & Partners, an ever-burgeoning investment banking firm, a decade ago. Blaylock is the founder, chairman and CEO of the firm and under his direction the firm has brokered multibillion dollar deals and carved out a unique niche for itself in the cutthroat world of bond trading.

"We have come far," Blaylock said of African Americans in general. "I am here today as a blessed testament of how far we have come."

Blaylock, a Winston-Salem native, was home last Thursday to keynote The Society for the Study of Afro-American History's annual banquet, which this year was appropriately themed "We've Come This Far."

More than 400 people came out to listen to Blaylock's success story, a tale he told spiced with lots of humor and references to his home-

town. Blaylock was a high school basketball sensation before going off to Georgetown University, where he was a member of the famed Final Four squad. He pursued a business career instead of the NBA after graduating from the university. He entered New York University's acclaimed Stern School of Business, where he earned his MBA.

Blaylock held senior management positions at several high-profile investment houses before deciding to start his own firm in 1993. To finance his firm, Blaylock sought to form a partnership agreement with Bear Stearns, an agreement that required him to put up everything he owned in order to secure \$10 million in financing.

He told the crowd that he experienced periods of uncertainty in the firm's early days, especially with his financial livelihood on the line, but Blaylock said he stepped out on faith and along the way used some of the values that were instilled in him right here in Winston-Salem.

"I credit my heritage here for allowing me to be bold and

take some risks and going for it," Blaylock said.

The gamble paid off big time for Blaylock. Blaylock & Partners has grown from a small, cramped office with four employees to a 100-employee operation with offices not only in New York (which are located in the heart of Fifth Avenue, right next to Saks) but also in Atlanta, San Francisco and Chicago. The firm traded more than \$3 trillion last year and constantly is ranked one of the best investment firms in the nation. The firm's reputation is just as glowing as its success. "Blaylock scored a major coup a few years ago when he landed Hazel O'Leary, a former secretary of energy in the Clinton administration. The firm also just recently added Dan Summers, who left his position as president and CEO of AT&T Broadband Services to join Blaylock & Partners.

Blaylock said that he is pleased that he is not the only African American living high in corporate America these days. He cited others such as Richard Parsons, the newly appointed CEO of AOL Time



Ronald Blaylock poses with Billy Rich, Phyllis Davis, second from left, and Joan Cardwell.

Warner, and Kenneth Chenault, chairman and CEO of American Express. Blaylock, Chenault, Parsons and a handful of other black corporate big-wigs recently held a Christmas party, where Blaylock said they listened to soul

classics and attempted The Bus Stop and other dance moves.

"The doors have opened," he said. "I see a lot of African Americans working on Wall Street. They are not getting these jobs because of quotes.

They are getting them because they are the best at what they do."

Those interested in joining the SSAH should contact Billy Rich, president, at (336) 650-1459.

## Valentine's

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American Dietetic Association, some studies show chocolate increases longevity by decreasing the risk of heart disease. Also, she said, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that a Tufts University researcher found that flavonoids in chocolate could lower the risk of cancer.

She said there's a myth that if you eat chocolate, you automatically will gain weight. However, she said, "It's easy to overeat chocolate." And if you eat a lot of chocolate, you may in fact gain weight. Again, moderation is the key. She offered these tips on how to satisfy your craving for chocolate: Make hot cocoa with cocoa and skim milk; heat it in the microwave.

Rather than gorging on chocolate in between meals, eat one piece (say, 1 ounce) of good chocolate, such as Godiva, at the end of the meal. "It really works if people will try it," Richardson said.

She also recommends Jello chocolate pudding.

In general, she said, the first three bites usually will satisfy a person's craving for a food. So try taking three bites of the food you crave, and then go do something else. After a few minutes, chances are you will be satisfied.

Another tip, she said, is that you don't have to feel obligated to eat every morsel on your plate. It's OK to leave food on your plate.

Now, what to do if you get a box of chocolates from your sweetheart on Valentine's Day? Look at Valentine's Day as a special occasion, and savor each piece of chocolate. "If you get a one-pound box with 20 pieces of chocolate, try to make it last 15 or 20 days, not two days or one day," Richardson said.

According to the American Dietetic Association, to include chocolate in your routine, limit other high-fat foods or cut portions. For example, use fat-free salad dressing, cheese or margarine. By making trade-offs, a

piece of chocolate or a small candy bar could fit into your eating plan. The ADA also says cocoa powder, which is virtually fat free, can make great brownies, cakes and cookies. And miniature chocolate bars or mini-chocolate chips often satisfy chocolate cravings with fewer calories - if you don't eat the whole bag.

According to B.U. Bridge, published by the Boston University Office of University Relations, Joan Salge Blake, an adjunct clinical assistant professor of nutrition at Sargent College and a dietitian, suggests angel food cake topped with sliced strawberries and chocolate syrup as her choice dessert for Valentine's Day. She recommends using chocolate syrup, such as Hershey's, which is made with cocoa, which has most of the fatty cocoa butter removed. A tablespoon contains

as few as 50 calories and zero fat.

According to the University of California, researchers found that chocolate contains more antioxidants than many green and orange vegetables. Researchers also found that chocolate hinders plaque buildup and that phenols in chocolate thin the blood, inhibiting blood-clot formation and helping prevent heart attacks.

In a study led by University of California-Davis nutritionist Cal Keen, researchers gave human volunteers about a tablespoon of cocoa powder (provided by Mars), much like unsweetened baking cocoa you buy at the grocery store. The cocoa powder was mixed with water and a little sugar to take the bitter edge off the taste. About two hours after the subjects drank the cocoa mixture, the levels of phenols peaked in their blood-

stream, fading away after a total of six hours. That means the health benefits are temporary.

Keen said the health benefits of the blood thinning and clotting prevention are like those of aspirin. Keen was quoted as saying, "The rather clear message is that with reasonable serving sizes we're seeing beneficial effects. People should not throw away their bottle of aspirin, but perhaps one should view chocolate as part of a healthy diet," according to an article on the University California, Santa Cruz, Web site.

However, some researchers question the nutritional value of chocolate. In an article titled "Chocolate: A Health Food?" on Tufts E-News (Tufts University), following the release of a study on the health benefits of chocolate the New York Post reported that several candy makers began touting their products

as a tasty version of health food. The Post said the study found that "ounce-for-ounce, chocolate has more antioxidant activity than many fruits and vegetables."

But two Tufts researchers said chocolate's nutritious value "melts" under scrutiny.

Tufts' Jeanne Goldberg, Ph.D., told The New York Post, "Chocolate is a wonderful food. But when someone tells me I have to eat 500 calories to get the health benefit, it kind of slows me down."

Tufts nutrition researcher Jeff Blumberg, Ph.D., who is a leading expert in antioxidant research, said that simply containing antioxidants "doesn't (automatically) make it (chocolate) a healthful choice. Nobody thinks of chocolate as a healthful food. It's a strange strategy from any kind of scientific perspective."

## EOG

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can also confuse them."

He noted that some of the long passages from Greek mythology may be challenging, but he believes that his granddaughter is prepared for the test.

Areatha Williams was an academically gifted student throughout school. She expressed that the test will be more challenging for some.

"I think that this test will be very hard for some. Some students are better in some areas than others. I thought it was OK, but for an average student, it may be very difficult in some areas."

Another parent said, "It was very overwhelming how much the children must know. I needed

to know what was expected and required of my child on the EOG, I realize how much the teachers have to teach the children in order for them to be successful on these tests."

Sorority members who assisted Squire included Kim Peters (coordinator), Sallie Ledbetter, Joyce Mack, Evelyn Sanders, Wendy Campbell, Monique Jones, Ray Carpenter, Mae Burner, Carla Danzy, Daisy Staten, and Virginia Allen.

Principal Steve Flora said the testing for parents is crucial because "parents need to know that the curriculum has changed since they were in school. It is far more challenging and difficult than it was when we were in school. The more our parents are familiar with what we are doing, the more they can help."

## History happens every day.



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