

BUSINESS FOCUS

Briefs

Xerox faces race, gender complaint

(Special to the NNPA) — A group of minority employees based in different offices around the nation has filed a racial and gender discrimination complaint against Xerox Corp. with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The employees, based in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Dallas, Houston and New York, allege that they were subjected to offensive jokes, language, and black dolls hanging from nooses. The complaint also states less qualified whites were given promotions before their black co-workers.

Dawn Clarke-Hinton, a 15-year employee in Atlanta, told reporters, "I started experiencing racism two weeks after I started (in Atlanta)." Clarke-Hinton said she was called "Buckwheat" because of the way she wore her hair.

Clarke-Hinton, who transferred to Atlanta from California in September 2000, went to human resources. She said nothing was done about her complaints.

James Vagnini, attorney for the plaintiffs, said, "This company ranks itself as one of the most diverse companies to work in for African Americans. I think it's a joke how they can turn and point to the one or two minority people in high-level executive positions and think they're off the hook. It makes me question why they have these people in those positions."

Xerox officials deny the allegations.

"We will vigorously defend ourselves," said Christina Carone, spokesperson for Xerox. "In no uncertain terms, Xerox strongly denies any behavior of systematic discrimination."

Biloxi prepares for possible Black Springbreak 2002

BILOXI, Miss. (AP) — City work crews are preparing for an estimated 60,000 to 90,000 young adults who might converge on the Mississippi Gulf Coast early next month for Black Springbreak 2002.

Biloxi and New Orleans are the cities being considered for the April 5 weekend event. Where the party takes place will depend on subscribers to the Black Beach Week newsletter.

The subscribers will choose between Biloxi and New Orleans in an online vote.

The Internet newsletter had announced this year's event would be held at Jazzland theme park in New Orleans, but park officials said earlier this month that they could not prepare for the crowds.

Black Beach Week will reveal the results of its online poll next week.

If Biloxi is chosen, public work crews will be ready to roll out the orange security fencing that was part of a public safety plan to keep U.S. 90 traffic moving and pedestrians safe during Black Springbreak 2001, the second year the event was held on the coast.

"I kind of have a gut feeling that something's going to come here," said Biloxi Mayor A.J. Holloway. "We don't want to overreact, but to be prepared for something like this, it takes a week of good weather to get ready."

Police from Biloxi and Gulfport and representatives from the Harrison County Sheriff's Department were scheduled to meet Tuesday to decide how they will advise the public about traffic and public safety issues if Black Springbreak comes back to Biloxi.

Anheuser-Busch donates \$250,000 to Tom Joyner Foundation

Anheuser-Busch Inc. and the Tom Joyner Foundation have joined forces to help provide scholarships for adult students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The scholarships are designed specifically for non-traditional students 30 and older, to help them obtain college degrees.

Through the Budweiser Urban Scholarship Program, Anheuser-Busch will donate \$250,000 to the Tom Joyner Foundation to help with the scholarship program. The pledge is part of the company's \$5 million commitment to education over the next five years, a pledge that was announced last year.

"Anheuser-Busch is extremely proud and excited about our commitment to higher education," said Johnny Furr Jr., vice president, sales development and community affairs, Anheuser-Busch Inc. "Collaborating with the Tom Joyner Foundation will help us reach millions across the country, to raise awareness about the company's commitment to education and to filling a niche by providing scholarship dollars for adult students who need finances to start a late college career or to complete a degree."

Furr made the announcement at a live Sky Show concert in Nashville at Tennessee State University's Gentry Center. Furr presented a check to radio personality Tom Joyner during the early-morning show featuring R&B artist Keith Sweat. In 2002, Anheuser-Busch will sponsor a total of 23 Sky Shows in cities across the country, including St. Louis, New York, Houston and New Orleans.

Founded in 1998, the Tom Joyner Foundation raises scholarship funds for students who attend HBCUs. Funds are raised during Joyner's nationally syndicated Tom Joyner morning radio show and during the popular Sky Shows, which feature famous vocal artists at early-morning concerts. The foundation also sponsors a "Fantastic Voyage" cruise that raises more than \$1 million for scholarships. Of the funds raised for the foundation, 100 percent are used for scholarships.

Like the Tom Joyner Foundation, the Budweiser Urban Scholarship Program is instrumental in helping college students obtain college degrees.

Established in 1999, the Budweiser Urban Scholarship Program is a joint effort between the company, its local wholesalers and community-based organizations that include various National Urban League affiliates and 100 Black Men of America chapters from across the country.

NAACP recognizes UPS with award

Group lauds UPS's commitment to education and supplier diversity

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

NEW YORK — Citing UPS's commitment to help build strong communities nationwide, the NAACP has presented the company with its coveted "Corporate Citizen of the Year Award," which recognizes U.S. corporations for their involvement and support of critical community issues. The award was presented to UPS Chairman and CEO Mike Eskew during the NAACP's 93rd Annual Meeting in New York City.

"For more than three decades, UPS has worked with the NAACP to expand educational and economic opportunities for minorities and other citizens," said Kweisi Mfume, president and chief executive officer of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "We salute the company for its commitment, and applaud its

employees across the nation who are working every day to help build strong communities."

Mfume praised UPS for its national and local charitable giving programs, as well as its management training initiative that allows company executives to work with nonprofit groups to better understand the needs and problems of the community.

In accepting the award, Eskew said, "We're proud of our long history of collaboration with the NAACP, and today's award reinforces the strength of the friendship. UPS and the NAACP share similar values; we both understand that our organizations are only as strong as the communities we serve."

In addition to working with the NAACP on community improvement initiatives, UPS was cited for its work to expand edu-



Kweisi Mfume, president of NAACP, presents UPS CEO Mike Eskew with his award.

ational opportunities for minority youths through the NAACP's ACT-SO program, and for expanding business opportunities for minority and women-owned companies through the UPS supplier diversity program.

"We are proud of the opportunities we've had to contribute to the ongoing success of the NAACP," Eskew said, "and we look forward to continued partnerships to build the communities in which we all live and work."



Left to right: William Souder Jr., CLU, president of Atlanta Life General Agency Inc.; John Wilcher and Pearlle Wilcher of the Wilcher Insurance Group of South Carolina; and Grand Master Melvin Chambers.

Insurance group signs agreement with Prince Hall Grand Lodge

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Life General Agency Inc. President William Souder Jr., CLU, and the Wilcher Insurance Group of South Carolina recently announced an agreement with the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina and Jurisdiction Inc. of Durham, N.C., to provide members benefits program offering life insurance products and financial services products.

The Grand Lodge has more than 25,000 members. The agreement is the first of its kind for the agency since it became a member of the newly restructured Atlanta Life Financial

Group.

"We are pleased to offer a wealth-building program," Souder said. "Atlanta Life has effectively provided insurance coverage and financial services for other large organizations, and we will continue to do so as part of our expanded portfolio of insurance products and services. The plan makes it possible for over 25,000 members to take advantage of wealth-building products, such as insurance products at competitive rates, financial management seminars, financial services products, and much more."

Marvin D. Chambers, most worshipful grand master, said, "We have been in negotiation for some time with several

companies for a program that will provide this additional benefit to our members. Atlanta Life General Agency worked with us to craft what we believe is an excellent opportunity. We know our members will be pleased."

The Atlanta Life General Agency is a subsidiary of Atlanta Life Insurance Co., which provides insurance products and financial services through more than 22 general agencies throughout the United States.

The Wilcher Insurance Group of South Carolina operates in 22 states. A former slave, Alonzo Franklin Herndon, founded Atlanta Life Insurance Co. in 1905.

Black employees to receive nearly \$2 million

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Factory employees who were harassed with epithets, racist graffiti and displays of hangman's nooses will receive a \$1.82 million settlement, federal officials said.

A lawsuit filed in January 2000 on behalf of 32 current and former black employees of Scientific Colors Inc. accused the company of racial harassment at its Rockdale facility.

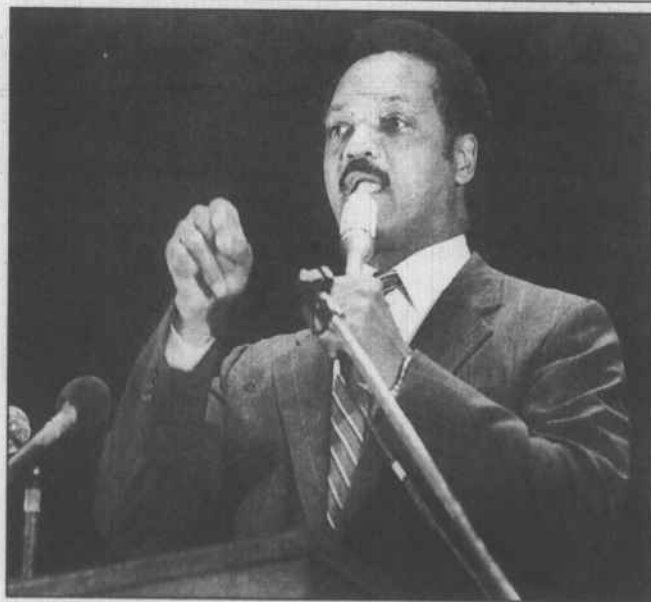
The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission announced a settlement in the lawsuit Wednesday.

"Racial harassment, including racist graffiti, is no more acceptable in a factory than at any other place of business. It's illegal, and companies that permit it to continue may be exposing themselves to costly risks," said EEOC attorney Ethan Cohen said.

The settlement also requires implementation of preventative discrimination measures such as employee training and using a camera to monitor the factory for racist graffiti.

Scientific Colors manufactures pigments used in printing ink and employs about 200 people.

The company did not immediately return calls seeking comment.



Jesse Jackson

Jackson wants companies to repay blacks

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Rev. Jesse Jackson says insurers should repay blacks that "paid more and got less" when they bought policies from Liberty Life Insurance Co. and other companies.

Jackson said Saturday his Rainbow/PUSH coalition will set up a hotline for people who think they were overcharged based on race. People calling the hotline can have the status of policies checked.

The state Insurance Department fined Liberty Life \$2 million and suspended the Greenville company from selling insurance in South Carolina for one year. The company, owned by the Royal Bank of Canada, is appealing.

The agency focused mostly on policies sold between the 1940s and 1960s and said Liberty Life had race-based policies that cost blacks more.

Jackson said policyhold-

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