

BUSINESS FOCUS

Briefs

Black Chamber will meet Feb. 18

The Winston-Salem Black Chamber of Commerce will meet Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. at the Hewitt Business Center, 1001 S. Marshall Street. In commemoration of Black History Month, Dr. Winston Bell of Winston-Salem State University will be the guest speaker and James Huff, artist, will spotlight his business.

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Miriam McCarter, president, at 724-0334.

International association recognizes Walker, town clerk of Lewisville

Joyce M. Walker, town clerk of Lewisville, has been awarded the prestigious designation of certified municipal clerk (CMC) from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) for achieving its high educational, experience and service requirements.

Walker has been employed with the town of Lewisville since 1996, serving as receptionist before appointment to her current position of town clerk in October 2000.

She attained her designation as certified municipal clerk through completion of the IIMC-approved Municipal Clerks Institute Program conducted by the Institute of Government, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. This program provides more than 100 student/instructor contact hours of in-depth courses in managerial and leadership skills, social and interpersonal concerns, and technical training needed to deal with changes taking place in government today.

She has attended courses and seminars sponsored by the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, N.C. Department of Labor, N.C. Technology Transfer Center, Institute of Government, Forsyth Technical Community College, C&P Telephone, Bell Atlantic and Sperry.

Active in professional affiliations, she is a member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, N.C. Association of Municipal Clerks, N.C. Association of Local Governmental Employee Safety and Carolina Association of Government Purchasers.

Walker has been a member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks since July 1999. She joins 222 active municipal clerks from North Carolina who currently hold the designation of certified municipal clerk.

The unique certification program of IIMC was launched in 1970, climaxing a decade of planning. The program aids municipal clerks and deputy clerks in improving job performance and recognizes the professionalization of the municipal clerk's office.

Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce wins award

The Greater Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce has been selected the 2003 Friend of Education Award winner by the N.C. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (NCASCD).

The announcement will be made at 9 a.m. today in the Calloway-Oakley Ballroom of the Pinehurst Hotel Conference Center in Pinehurst.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools nominated the Chamber of Commerce for the award.

The Friend of Education Award is presented annually to a person, agency or corporation that has made significant contributions in education through visionary and committed leadership. The Winston-Salem Chamber was selected for this prestigious award for its dedication to the Touched by Technology Campaign, leadership in the 2001 school bond referendum, and the corporate volunteers program in the local public schools. The Chamber of Commerce-initiated Touched by Technology campaign raised more than \$8 million to support the effort to infuse technology in the classroom and close the achievement gap.

The Chamber of Commerce also played an instrumental organizational role in the 2001 Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school bond campaign, which yielded \$150 million in improvements to the school system. \$15 million of which was dedicated to improve the use of technology in schools. In partnership with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the Chamber of Commerce recruits, organizes and energizes hundreds of corporate volunteers in working with at-risk schoolchildren.

Hip-hop design firm offers help to minority entrepreneurs

DAYTON, Ohio - A hip-hop graphic design firm extends help to minority-owned startup businesses. Help includes a small business tool kit and providing a listing of free Web applications.

Cypher Signature Design Group (CSDG), a new media design firm specializing in the hip-hop and urban music industries, is offering free small business assistance targeting minority business owners. CSDG provides entrepreneurs high-quality new media design services, which include Web design, e-commerce development, CD layouts, and custom projects.

CSDG was founded in September 2000 by Rhonda Winn, a graphic artist, who was only 22 years old at the time. CSDG's new small business tool kit, called the CSDG Small Biz Guidebook, offers a unique perspective on starting and managing a new business. It includes more than 75 pages or tips and research. The kit also includes a CD-ROM and additional specialized information for record and clothing labels, retailers, and other popular start-up businesses. Registered users are offered a chance to win the business tool kit for free, and it is included for free with any new CSDG design project.

CSDG is also offering a free listing on UrbanEntry.com, an online music store that features urban music. The site will launch in the spring of 2003, and artists are encouraged to sign up now. Independent labels and artists can visit [cyphersdg.com](http://www.cyphersdg.com) for more information.

For more information, visit www.cyphersdg.com or contact a representative at info@cyphersdg.com.

Call put out to boycott Pepsi products

BY DEEPTI HAJELA
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network said an economic boycott of Pepsi would start next week unless the company runs an ad featuring the rapper Ludacris that was pulled last year.

"Falling out of favor in the hip-hop community could be very damaging," Simmons said recently. He also wants Pepsi to issue an apology and donate \$5 million to his charity organization.

Pepsi yanked the Ludacris ad in August, a day after Fox News Channel's Bill O'Reilly ran a segment criticizing the company for using the rapper. O'Reilly

questioned Ludacris' appropriateness as a spokesman based on his song lyrics.

Ludacris is on the Def Jam label, which Simmons founded. His 2001 album "Word of Mouf" includes the song "Move Bitch," one of his biggest hits.

At a news conference, Simmons said he didn't have a problem with Pepsi's decision at the time and that it was Pepsi's right to pull the commercial. But he objected when he saw an ad for Pepsi Twist during the Super Bowl that featured the Osbournes, whose MTV show is filled with audio bleeps to block foul language.

"They are being hypocritical in this case," Simmons said.

Pepsi spokesman Larry

Jabbonsky issued a statement saying, "The Ludacris situation was unfortunate for all concerned. We learned from it, and we moved on. We completely understand and respect Russell Simmons' passion for promoting hip-hop music, and we are working with him and others to do just that."

Jabbonsky had no comment when asked about Pepsi's reaction to the prospect of a boycott.

Simmons said the boycott, which would start this week, would apply to Pepsi and its subsidiary companies, whose products include Mountain Dew, Aquafina water and Lipton's Iced Tea.

"In hip-hop," he said, "our idea is if you don't want us, we don't want you."



Ludacris

Top firms say affirmative action yields better recruits

BY ANNE GEARAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Dozens of big companies are backing the University of Michigan and its affirmative action policy before the Supreme Court, saying such programs help produce better workers of all races and ethnic backgrounds.

The University of Michigan case is the most significant affirmative action case to reach the court in decades. At issue is whether racial preference programs unconstitutionally discriminate against white students.

Microsoft, Intel, American Airlines, Procter & Gamble, Eastman Kodak and PepsiCo are among more than 40 Fortune 500 companies siding with the University of Michigan.

"If you're going to be a global company and you're going to attract and retain the best people, then the mirror you have to present is that you're a very diverse company," said James Hackett, CEO of Steelcase Corp., the top-selling office furniture company in the world.

Other corporations say racially and ethnically mixed workers help sell products at home and abroad, and that whites entering a diverse working world benefit from time spent in the classroom

with students of other races and backgrounds.

"It makes all the business sense in the world. We sell vehicles in every corner of the globe," and want employees who look like and understand other cultures, said Edd Snyder, spokesman for General Motors. "Where do you get that employee base? From universities and colleges."

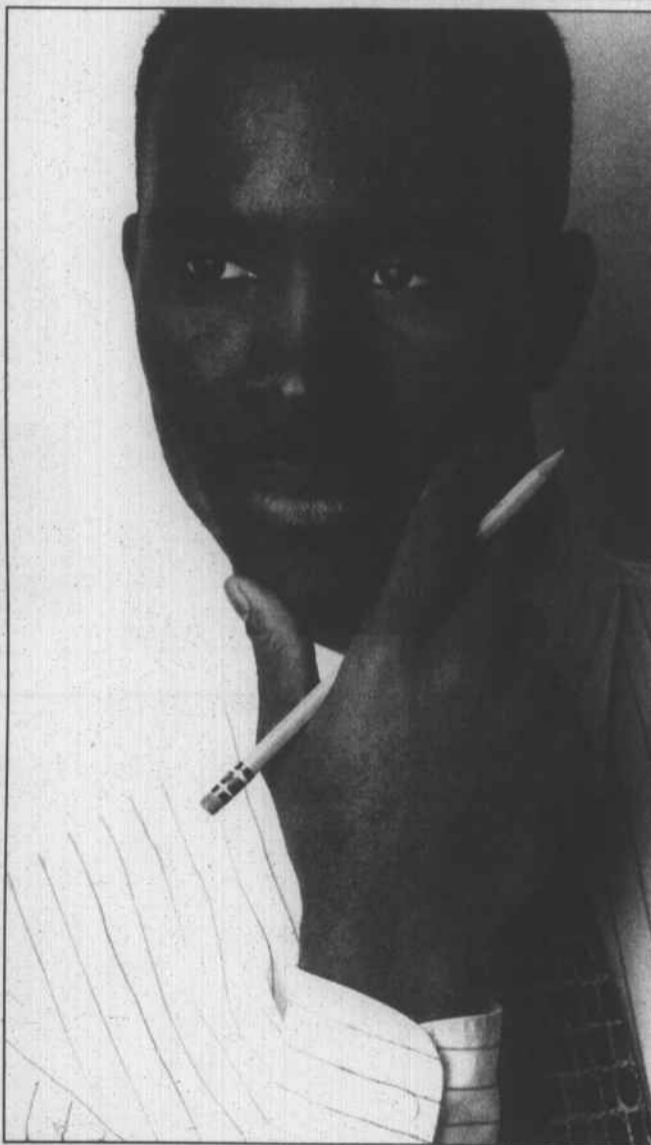
The companies' position is at odds with President Bush and many Republican and conservative lawyers and activists.

"His leadership is outstanding, but I disagree with him," Hackett said. "The notion of linking the issue of affirmative action to colleges having the right to admissions discretion - I don't think that's a link that needs to be made."

The companies' Supreme Court brief supporting the university is due later this month. Numerous labor, civil rights and liberal legal groups also are expected to file briefs supporting the school.

The Supreme Court is using plans devised by Michigan's premier public university to revisit an opaque 1978 ruling that eliminated racial quotas in university admissions but left room for race to be considered alongside other factors.

See Firms on A9



Top firms are siding with the University of Michigan affirmative action policy. They say such policies are good for future employees.

Lawsuit accuses carmaker of racial bias

BY ERIC FIDLER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO - A lawsuit filed last week accuses DaimlerChrysler's financing subsidiary of denying credit to black applicants on the basis of their race and where they lived.

"Chrysler Finance has decided they don't want to finance cars purchased by black people," said Steve Berman, the plaintiffs' attorney.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of six Chicago-area residents but seeking class-action status, also charges that the subsidiary unlawfully repossessed vehicles from 70 black customers who received credit.

The plaintiffs claim Auburn Hills, Mich.-based DaimlerChrysler and a subsidiary, Chrysler Financial Co., tolerated racist practices.

James Ryan, spokesman for DaimlerChrysler Services North America, said, "We are confident that our credit evaluation process treats all applicants fairly and lawfully."

See Suit on A9

Black actors featured in 'Oscar' ads

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Lincoln, a luxury automobile company, and lifestyle magazine Savoy teamed up once again to spotlight African-American achievement in Hollywood. Recently, they gathered some of the best and brightest talents in film at a photo shoot for a magazine insert in Hollywood.

The insert, scheduled for release in April 2003, will feature the Lincoln line of vehicles with actors, screenwriters, producers and directors now considered among the power elite of Hollywood; they are those that have "traveled well," "arrived" in Hollywood.

Plans are to officially unveil the photos at the star-studded annual Savoy Pre-Oscar party in Hollywood on March 22. They will be featured as inserts in the April 2003 editions of Savoy, Heart & Soul and Honey magazines. The photos will showcase Lincoln vehicles and celebrities:

- Mekhi Phifer - actor. Film credits include "8 Mile" (2002), "Imposter" (2002), "O" (2000), "Soul Food" (1997), "Clockers" (1995).

- George Tillman Jr. - director, producer, screenwriter. Credits include "Barbershop" (2002), "Movies



Lincoln's Baakim Coleman (from left), actor Mekhi Phifer, Lincoln's Christina Francis and Vanguard Media's Len Burnett pose in front of a 2003 Lincoln Navigator.

With Soul - 2 Pak" (2002), "Men of Honor" (2000), "Soul Food" (1997).

- Robin Lee - actress. Credits include "National Security" (2003), "Deliver Us From Eva" (2003), "Have Plenty" (1998).

- Regina Hall - actress. Credits include "The Other Brother" (2002), "Paid in Full" (2002), "Scary Movie 2" (2001), "Scary Movie" (2000).

- Reggie Rock Bythewood - director, screenwriter. Film credits include "Biker Boyz" (2003), "Cradle 2 the Grave" (2003), "Dancing in September" (2001), "Get on the Bus"

(1996).

- Gina Prince-Bythewood - director, screenwriter. Film credits include "Biker Boyz" (2003), "Drumline" (2002), "Love and Basketball" (2000).

This marks Lincoln's fourth year in spotlighting African-American successes in filmed entertainment. Lincoln celebrated the contributions and accomplishments of legendary producer Suzanne de Passe and mega-star Samuel L. Jackson at the 2002 Lincoln-Savoy Pre-Oscar party and continues to be a leading sponsor of the annual American Black Film Festival.