

# Oscar Harris Named Southeastern Minority "Entrepreneur Of The Year"

By Loretta Manago  
Post Managing Editor

Receiving the recent honor of being the "Southeastern Minority Entrepreneur of the Year," carries a lot of weight with Oscar Harris, president of Turner Associates, an architectural firm based in Atlanta, Ga.

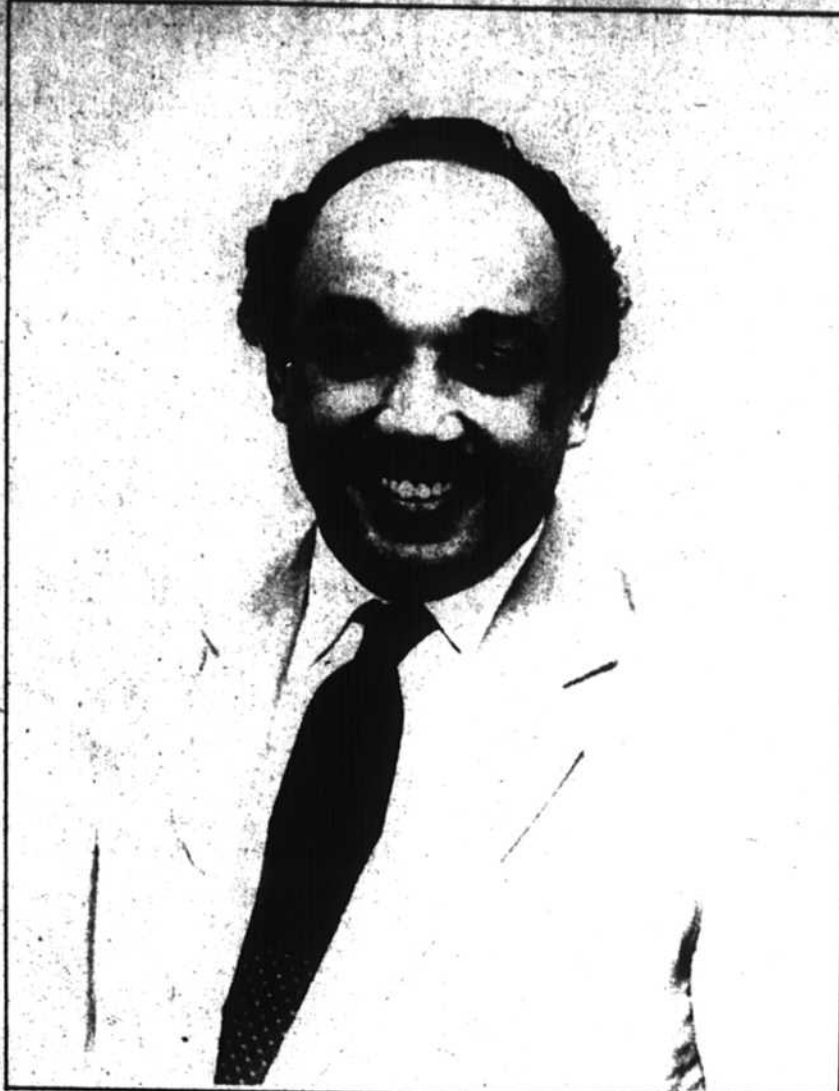
Less than a decade ago Harris was an architect with an established firm, with the plans of going into business for himself and even further down the road than that, Harris was a consulting statistician with IBM.

He was drawn to architecture as a young lad. While he was on a field trip with his school, Harris and his classmates visited a construction site and he became mesmerized. From that day on it was his dream to become an architect, but it wasn't a dream that his parents, who were both pharmacists, were enthusiastic about. Initially, Harris' plans didn't work out as he thought.

Completing college and landing his first job as a statistician, Harris was soon bored and decided that it was best to be good at one thing than to be second rate at something else. He soon found himself entering the graduate architectural school at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh.

It seems as though that every since that day that Harris began to pursue his dream of becoming an architect, he had known his direction and hasn't steered from that path, once.

Starting out eight years ago, Harris had an office, approximately 550 square feet and a brochure that had his name on it. Today, Turner Associates has 35 employees and has recently moved into larger quarters overlooking Central Park City, with 12,000 square feet.



Oscar Harris  
.....Turner Associates president

"In the beginning it was challenging to find projects to work on, but there was one particular firm that gave me a project and that started the flow. Then, I was committed to doing quality work in keeping with the projected time frame. I'm still that way today," commented

Harris. Turner Associates provides comprehensive architectural, space planning, and interior design services to its developer clients. The firm offers timely assistance in site analysis and master planning. A unique feature of the company is its Creative Design Management process, which assures significant client input and consideration of all key design parameters for a cost-effective and exciting building design.

In the business world, minority firms are quick to go under. Not Turner Associates. Harris has kept his business above water and prospering by "focusing in on a zone."

"I believe one reason why aspir-

ing business owners don't succeed in what they're doing is because they don't focus in on one thing long enough. One day you see them, they may be selling computers and the next time you see them they're selling real estate. I believe that you have to be doing one thing long enough to know what you're doing. By switching from one field to another it doesn't give people time enough to focus in on you," appraised Harris.

For Harris, his main focal point has been Atlanta. He has been directly involved in the Atlanta Zoo Revitalization Master Plan, the Underground Atlanta Revitalization and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority's mass

transportation system. At present, the firm's client list includes IBM, Coca-Cola, America Home Equities, and The City of Atlanta.

Having firmly established himself in Atlanta, Harris has now set his sights on Charlotte. "All we need is someone to open the line and we can take it from there." And when Harris does come to Charlotte look for him to design skyliners.

"I'm interested in designing symbols of civilization," commented Harris.

Harris is involved with several civic and professional organizations, including the International Business Fellows and the National Council of Boy Scouts.

## Local Support Boosts Army Recruiting Success

Army recruiters assigned to the three U.S. Army Recruiting Stations in Charlotte have commended Mecklenburg County residents for their support of recruiting as fiscal year 1985 ended on September 30.

Company Commander Captain Mark B. Camper said that 233 young men and women from this area took advantage of army opportunities during the fiscal year. "We appreciate that support," he said. "It's enlistments from cities and towns of America that collectively build an Army."

Fiscal Year 1985 began last October 1 with some apprehension from Army recruiters. A difficult year in military recruiting had been predicted due to an improved economy and fewer people between the ages of 17 to 19. Despite those factors, Army recruiters enlisted 125,434 Americans into the Regular Army. Another 68,391 joined the Army Reserve to serve part-time as citizen-soldiers.

Recruiting records indicate that the U.S. Army has possibly become the smartest fighting force in its history. Sixty-three percent of those who enlisted during fiscal year 1985 scored in the upper half of the Army's aptitude examination, versus 25 percent in 1980 and 56 percent last year. On the other end of the scale, Regular Army enlistees who scored in the lowest aptitude category fell to about nine percent from last year's 13 percent, and 1980's 57 percent.

"We try to recruit quality people every year," Camper said. "The

technology we have in today's sophisticated equipment demands a highly motivated person, someone with above average intelligence. Smarter people make better soldiers in every way."

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The recent passage of the New G.I. Bill Plus Army College Fund has enhanced the Army's college financial aid package by raising the benefits as high as \$25,200 for a four-year enlistment.

For a two-year enlistment, which only the Army offers, a soldier can accumulate up to \$17,000 from a personal contribution of only \$1,200.

Two years of college and the same personal contribution can furnish a two-year enlistee with up to \$21,000 toward continuing education, and an enlistment of three years, same contribution, can build an education fund of almost \$23,000.

More details on army enlistment can be obtained from recruiters at three army recruiting stations in Charlotte: Suite 200, One Charlotte-town Center, 1300 Baxter St., 372-6867; Suite 19, Tryon Mall, 4500 N. Tryon St., 598-6195 and 3601 E. Independence Blvd., 563-0560.

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## Economist Expresses Concern For Government Employed Blacks

Special To The Post

Blacks are far more dependent than whites on the public sector as a source of employment and income, reports Dr. Andrew Brimmer, a member of the Black Enterprise Board of Economists who is also a Washington, D.C.-based, consultant and former member of the Federal Reserve's Board of Governors, in the November issue of Black Enterprise magazine.

Unfortunately, that security may be shaken as cuts in social programs continue.

Brimmer also asserts that many black civil rights leaders rely heavily on Washington to provide these positions to their citizens. "Despite a decade of disappointments," writes Brimmer, "most black leaders still look expectantly to intervention by the federal government as the principal means of improving the economic status of the black community."

One reason for this is that there is less discrimination against blacks in government than in private companies, and over the past 20 years, blacks have found new opportunities in public service at the federal, state, and local levels.

In 1983, blacks held 9.5 percent of all jobs, and 14.9 percent of those were in the public sector, according to Black Enterprise. To look at it another way, blacks accounted for 18.1 percent of all federal government jobs and 14.1 percent of all state and local positions.

But these figures may soon change. Brimmer's conclusion: "It is clear that blacks will have to look mainly to the private sector for new jobs in the future."

The November issue of Black Enterprise is available on newsstands or by sending \$1.95 plus \$1 postage to the publisher, 130 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

## Druid Hills Garden Club Meet

Hattie McCree, Queen Ellis; Della Simmons, Sophease Blackmon, Roberta Lyles, Inez Ellis, Hazeline Long, Sadie English, Lois Love, and Eva Wiley recently attended the monthly meeting of the Druid Hills Garden Club at the home of Minnie Connor.

Reports were made on the preparations of the upcoming '86 convention. Mrs. Conner and Mrs. Long gave a brief report on the preparation and planting of spring bulbs and pansies. The president reported on the success and progress of the Bridlewood Jr. Garden Club.

Following the meeting, the members enjoyed refreshments and a filling repast.



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