

Black History Month

Medical Marvels

Charlotte transplant surgeon shows he's an educator also

By Herbert L. White
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Roger Denny's specialty is organ transplantation, but in his spare time he's an educator.

An ongoing crisis is the lack of black organ donors, something Denny sees all too often as a surgeon at Carolinas Medical Center. Although African Americans make up 12 percent of the U.S. population, they disproportionately account for the number of people awaiting kidney transplants. Denny speaks to church and community groups about the need for donors, which includes breaking myths and misconceptions about the process. Often, people are reluctant to donate on religious grounds, he said, but points out that none of the major religions prohibit donation. The key is communication and presenting donation as a life-extending gift.

"I'll talk to anybody who'll have me," he said. "I tell people if they will take an organ then they should be willing to give one. If you reach one person out of 30, that's fine. The black community is very smart. If they're exposed to information they can make an informed decision."

Denny is a rarity in an exclusive medical field.

He works at the Transplant Center Carolinas Medical Center and is one of 18 African Americans trained to perform the procedure in the U.S. In a typical year, Denny, who specializes in liver, kidney and pancreas surgery, performs about 50 transplants a year.

"It's a field I found interesting," said Denny, who came

to Charlotte in 2002. "Every surgery is a large surgery. That's why it's always interesting."



Denny

The interest runs in Denny's family. His brother Jason is also a transplant surgeon, making them 11 percent of the African Americans practicing the dis-

cipline nationally. Education is the key to success in the sciences and medicine and a requirement for surgeons, Denny said. Getting more African Americans into medicine requires more diligence in meeting academic and professional goals.

"It starts all the way back in high school," he said. "How many black kids go to college from high school? How many go on to medical school? And of those, how many will go into surgical fields? It's a

matter of numbers."

Denny, who interned at State University of New York-Brooklyn and trained for transplant surgery at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, stuck to his goals. The Mt. Sinai School of Medicine graduate is fulfilling his ambition by working

in one of the most demanding areas of medicine. It's also a chance to provide patients a gift that's useful every day.

"It's not a field that everyone can do," he said. "I love the field because when you give a person a transplant, you give them another chance at life."

Denny's work includes education. By monitoring hypertension or avoiding it altogether through diet and exercise, more people can lead healthy and productive lives. High blood pressure is one of the leading precursors to stroke and heart disease in African Americans.

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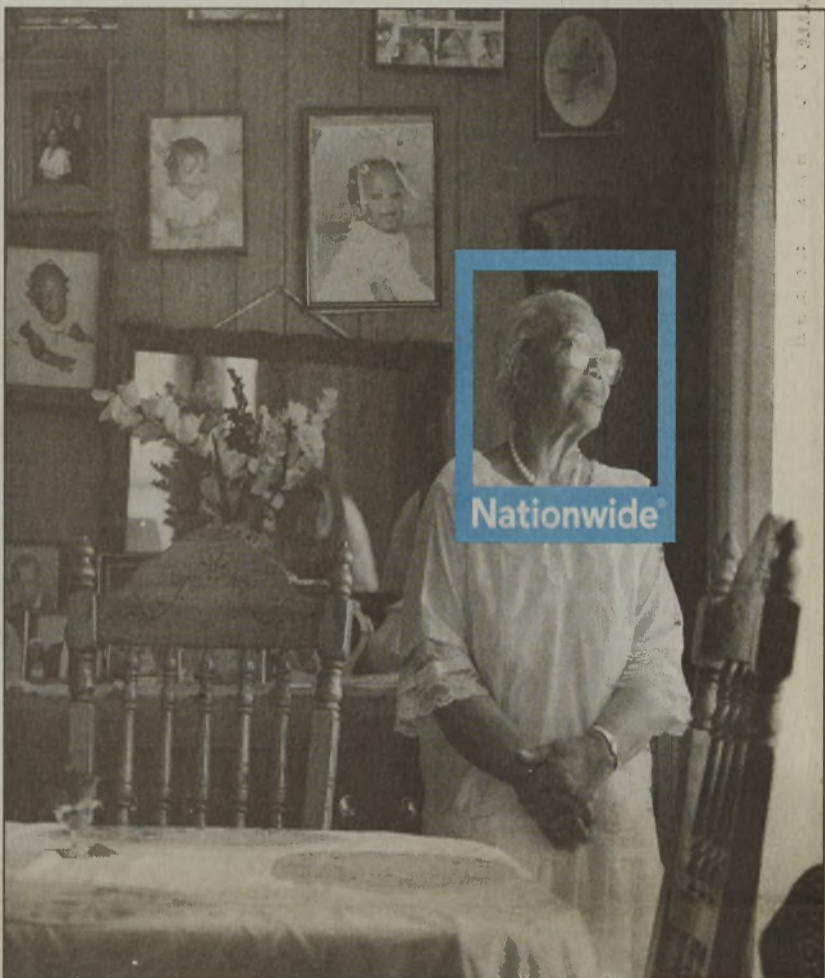
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Black History Matters!

Reflections from leaders at Cracker Barrel Old Country Store

During February, individuals, families, schools and organizations take time to salute the character, power and ingenuity of African Americans as part of Black History Month. At Cracker Barrel Old Country Store®, we believe that History and Black History are actually one in the same. During this Black History Month, we wanted to share some of the personal insights of our best assets... our people. We applaud every person and every process that has helped to make Black History Month a focal point during the year.

Vicki Gaulton
Restaurant District Manager
Nashville, Florida

"Black History Month is important because it's a time when we honor the men and women who committed their lives to the fight for equal rights. It's a time when I consider how their persistence paved the way for myself and other African Americans to participate in important decisions and meaningful activities that make life better for others."

Nelani Griffin
Vice President
Purchasing and Distribution

"I appreciate the focus on the important role African Americans have played in the success of this great nation. The struggles that have occurred in the African American community are woven into the fabric of much of what we do every day. Many of the opportunities that persons of various races enjoy today can be attributed to the leadership and commitment of previous generations of African Americans. I am humbled by their extreme devotion to work ethic, family, and spiritual values in the face of the limitations society placed on them."

Debbie Kiedwell
Vice President
Merchandising

"During Black History Month, we recognize the talent and creativity of people who have improved the world we live in. We recognize people who inspire us. We identify new heroes for ourselves and for our children. In the end, Black History Month causes us to reflect on what we do as individuals to promote fairness, kindness and understanding."

Donald M. Turner
President and
Chief Operating Officer

"I value Black History Month because we gain greater insight into the contributions African Americans have made to the world. I've always been intrigued with the discoveries of men like Charles Drew and George Washington Carver. Their stories are interesting - not because of their race - but because of their values and their accomplishments."

Kathly Dille
Regional Vice President
Restaurant Operations

"When I think of influential Americans, I think of Rosa Parks. She exemplified the kind of leadership I want to follow. Her courage under fire is a model for all of us. And when I consider the pressures she must have faced as a Black, female leader in the middle of the Civil Rights movement, my admiration continues to grow."

Vanessa Minter
Retail District Manager
Bartlett, Tennessee

"As we celebrate Black History Month, certain models come to mind. The first is Harriet Tubman and 'The Underground Railroad'. She was a woman of color who was willing to risk her own life to give others a better life. She

Notin Hill
Vice President
Human Resources

"The more we study Black history, the more we see that people have common goals and dreams. The more we discuss Black history, the more information we have to create a brighter future for everyone."