



Women's History

featuring "Women in Retail" Judith F. Osei Tutu Owner, "Liberty Services"

By Fran Farrer-Nash
THE CHARLOTTE POST

"Ladies should be looked upon as queens. And, as queens we want to look good, we want to represent," said Judith F. Osei Tutu. That is why she broadened her horizons and expanded her original business plan. After receiving rave reviews over her daily choices of African heritage ensembles, Osei Tutu decided to import a few for sale. The first shipment moved much faster than she imagined. Now she stocks a full line of African clothes and fabrics, shoes, jackets, handbags, and jewelry.

Osei Tutu has assisted area



Judith Tutu

churches and businesses by providing African attire for fashion shows. "You will find garments and fabrics here that can't be found in other shops because they're not only special orders, but special designs," she said.

Coming from a banking environment, Osei Tutu realized that mergers, unannounced downsizing, and generally unstable situations were becoming the norm. "I began thinking, it's time to take a risk - to do something for myself. If it works, great, if not, at least I tried," said Osei Tutu.

As a former banker she found that many African Americans did not have, or could not get checking accounts and credits cards which

makes it hard to pay bills, make purchases, or conduct business in general. This prompted her move into entrepreneurship. She opened Liberty Services in 2001. The goal was to provide a convenient bill paying location, check cashing alternatives, pre-paid phone and credit cards, fax and notary services.

Relocating to Charlotte was prompted while visiting friends in 1988. Osei Tutu saw women business owners, and realized it is doable. "There's not as much red tape for women in business as for men," Osei Tutu said. "Charlotte is what you make it. Live fast, or relaxed, it's up to you. I love it, I feel at home," she said.

A native of Ghana, Africa, Osei Tutu immigrated to New York in 1981. From 1987-1989, she attended Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, transferred to the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and received her B.A. in marketing, management/business in 1995. Osei Tutu studied at Johns Hopkins University from 1996-1997 and is a candidate for a Masters in liberal arts, international business, languages and bank-

ing. Osei Tutu began a banking career with Chase Manhattan Bank as an account representative, and was promoted to assistant branch manager within two years. In both positions she excelled topping previous accomplishments and garnering commendations for exceptional customer service. Osei Tutu joined Metropolitan Life Insurance/MetLife Securities as an account representative, and earned awards for selling four \$1 Million policies in a year. Knowing her excellent banking record, The Harbor Bank of Maryland hired Osei Tutu as branch manager in 1999. She remained there until relocating to Charlotte in 2001.

To relax Osei Tutu enjoys reading, gardening and walking.

Tutu is happily married to Osei Tutu Frimpong. They have two sons, Chris, 15, and Nick, 22 who works with Tutu in the store. The family are members of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church.

Visit Judith at 3201 Beatties Ford Road, Suite B, Charlotte, NC 28216, call 704-398-1488, or e m a i l : LibertyServices2@yahoo.com



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Judith Tutu

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