

Winston Mutual:

A Rock of Stability

By John W. Templeton
Staff Writer

When George E. Hill assumed the post as president of Winston Mutual Life Insurance Company, "We were stagnant in growth. We weren't growing at a rate commensurate with the industry," the bearded executive recalled.

But in the past five years, the 73-year-old firm, black Winston-Salem's largest business, has more than doubled its insurance in force from \$62 million to \$143 million and increased its profitability.

The key, say Hill, was coping with change.

"One of the major factors that hurt us was that the white agent used to carry two rate books, one for whites and one for blacks. As things got better for us, they began using one rate and then they hit upon the idea of hiring blacks to take advantage of the black market."

"None of the black companies were prepared for that," he recalled. "We had to re-identify certain areas where we could focus."

Winston Mutual has gone aggressively after large group accounts such as Wachovia, R. J. Reynolds, Thomasville Furniture, Hanes Corp., Winston-Salem State University and A & T State University.

The growth has not come at the expense of the individual clients who have been the backbone of the company since it was founded on August 6, 1906 as the Winston Industrial Association.

"Heretofore, we had been marketing a lot of industrial policies," said Hill. "We were not trying to develop the person a total insurance plan. Now we try to market a total program concept."

For Winston Mutual, insurance is more than just a group of figures. Since the founding, the firm has been intertwined with the lives of its customers.

"To me, insurance is the only way blacks have of helping their children, the only way one can leave a sizeable estate," said Hill.

The security aspect has always been important, said Andrew W. McKnight, secretary of the firm and an employee since 1924.

Speaking of George Washington Hill, the original founder who became president and held the company together through depression and wars, "I used to see them come into Mr. Hill's office crying, some times," said McKnight.

"We've meant employment for many," he added. "At Mutual, the one concern has been help to black people throughout the years."

"For instance, Winston Mutual is the one that opened mortgage opportunities for homes and businesses," he said. The firms still does close to half million dollars a year in residential mortgages, mostly to blacks here in the city.

McKnight's father, J. C. McKnight, was among the founders of the firm along with Hill, Robert W. Brown, J. S. Pitts, Jim Ellington, W. A. Jones, J. W. Lewis, John A. Blume, L. L. Johnson and Ed Smith.

They incorporated the firm on Dec. 10, 1907 and the firm progressed from small one-office quarters in the black business district downtown to a former grocery store and funeral home at 11 and Woodland.

In 1969, Winston Mutual moved into its showpiece headquarters on Fifth Street.

The company that began as a mutual aid fund has now accumulated assets of \$4,880,414, according to the 1978 annual statement.

The younger Hill, grandson of George W. Hill, sees modest growth in the future for the company, only licensed to do business in North Carolina. "We want to increase our market share throughout N.C. with the possibility of going to an adjoining state," said Hill.

Looking at the present with satisfaction, he noted, "We feel that without the services being provided by Winston Mutual, there are quite a few people who would not have the degree of economic security they now have."



Winston-Mutual Building

The Winston Mutual Building on Fifth Street stands as a monument to the work of men and women like George Washington Hill, a former black janitor who led the firm into prominence.

Chronicle Newsline
723-9863

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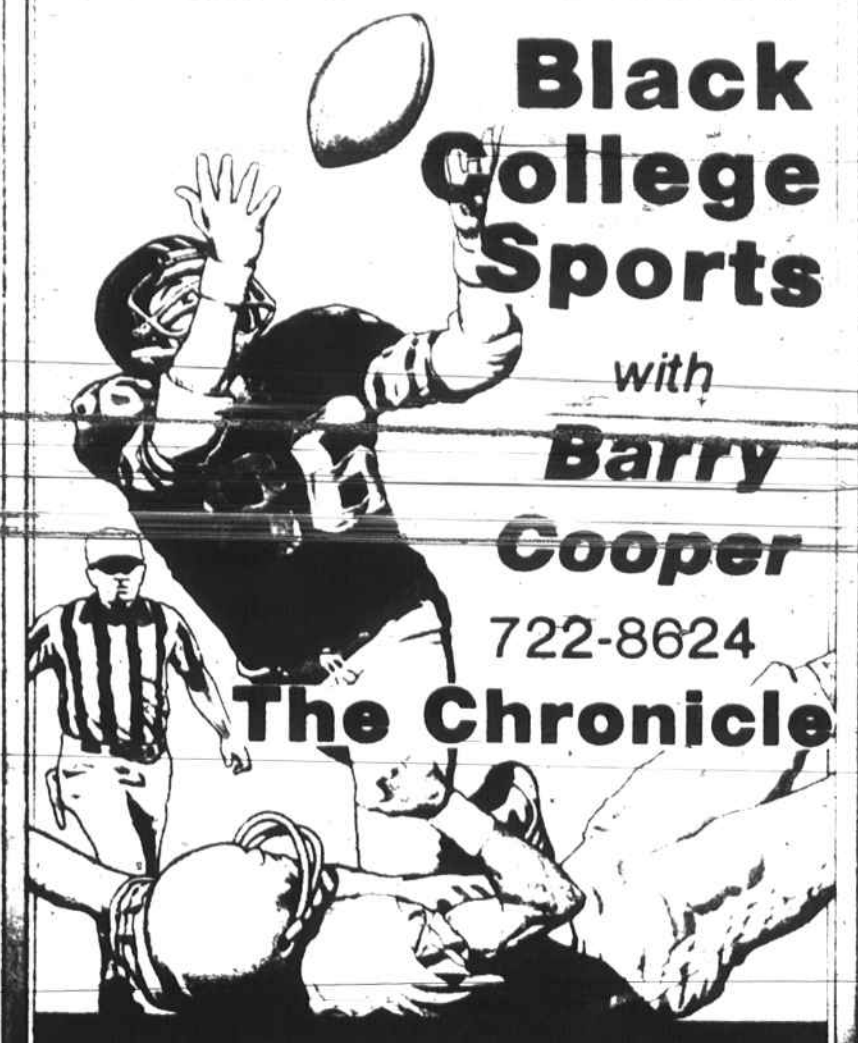
Black College Sports

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The Chronicle



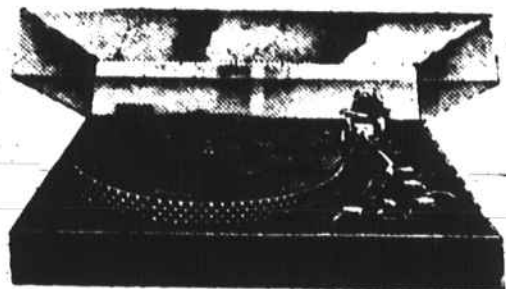
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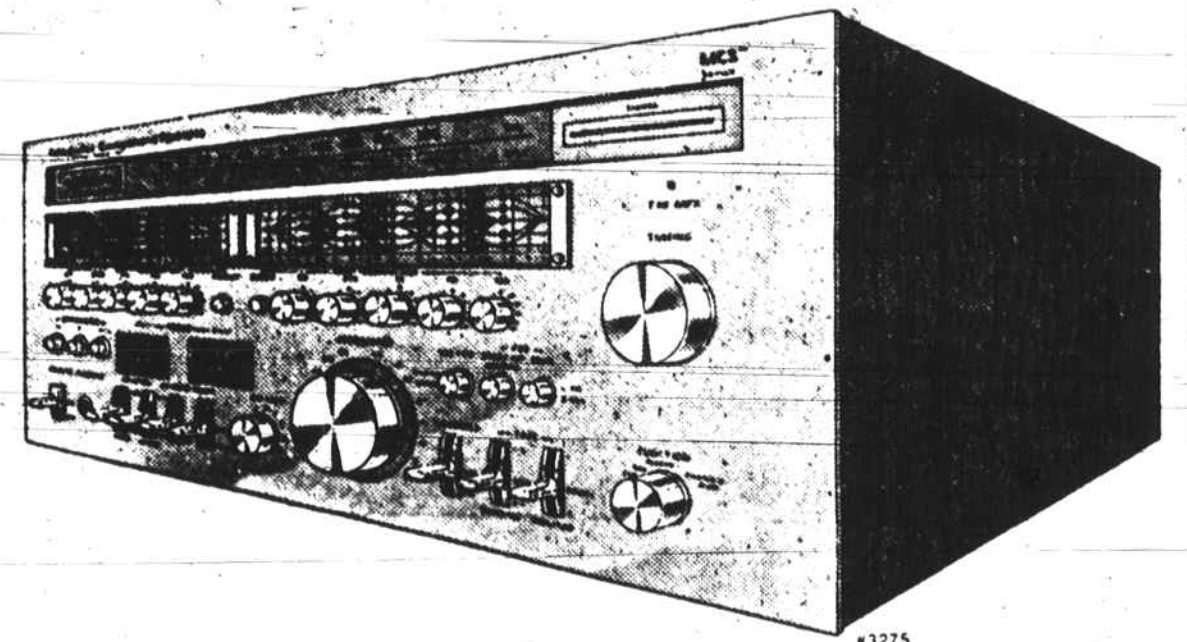
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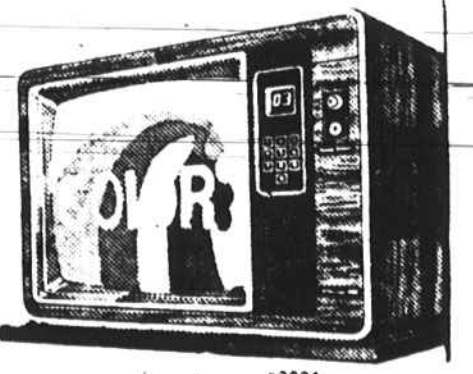
Within 5 years of purchase of speakers or 3 years of purchase of single or multiple play turntable, receiver, tuner, amplifier or tape deck of this Modular Component System, we will, at our option, repair or replace any items if defective in material or workmanship. Parts and labor are included. Just contact the nearest JCPenney facility for prompt service.



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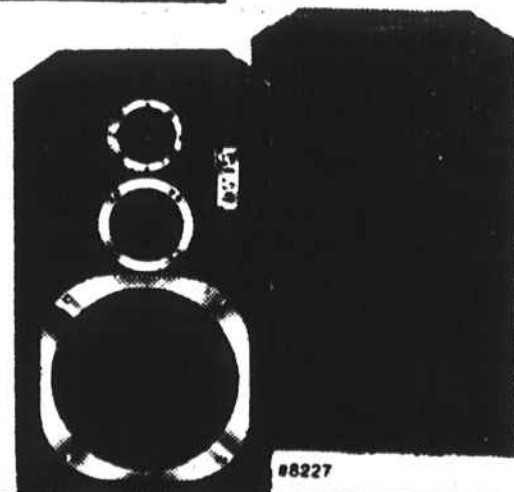
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Save \$200 on MCS Series® 3-way speakers.

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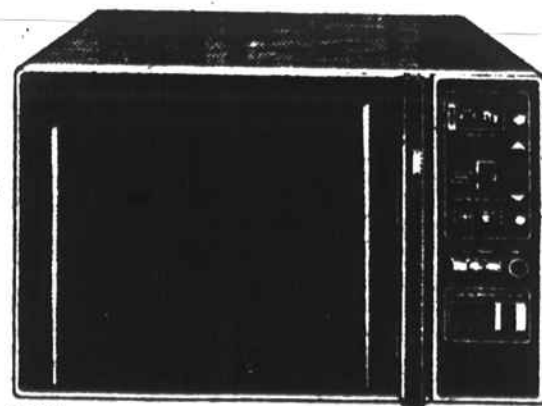
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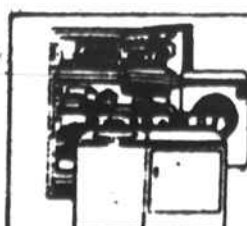
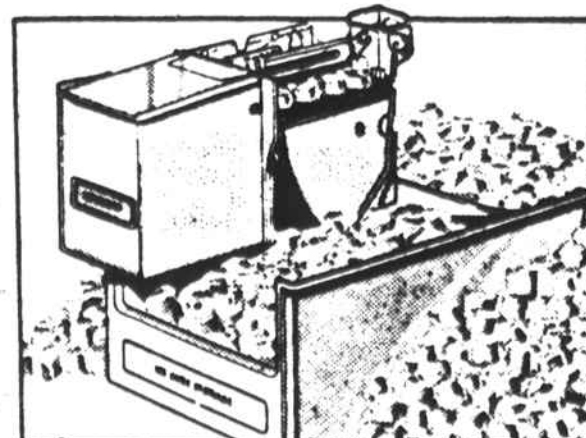
Save \$90

Time/temperature microwave.

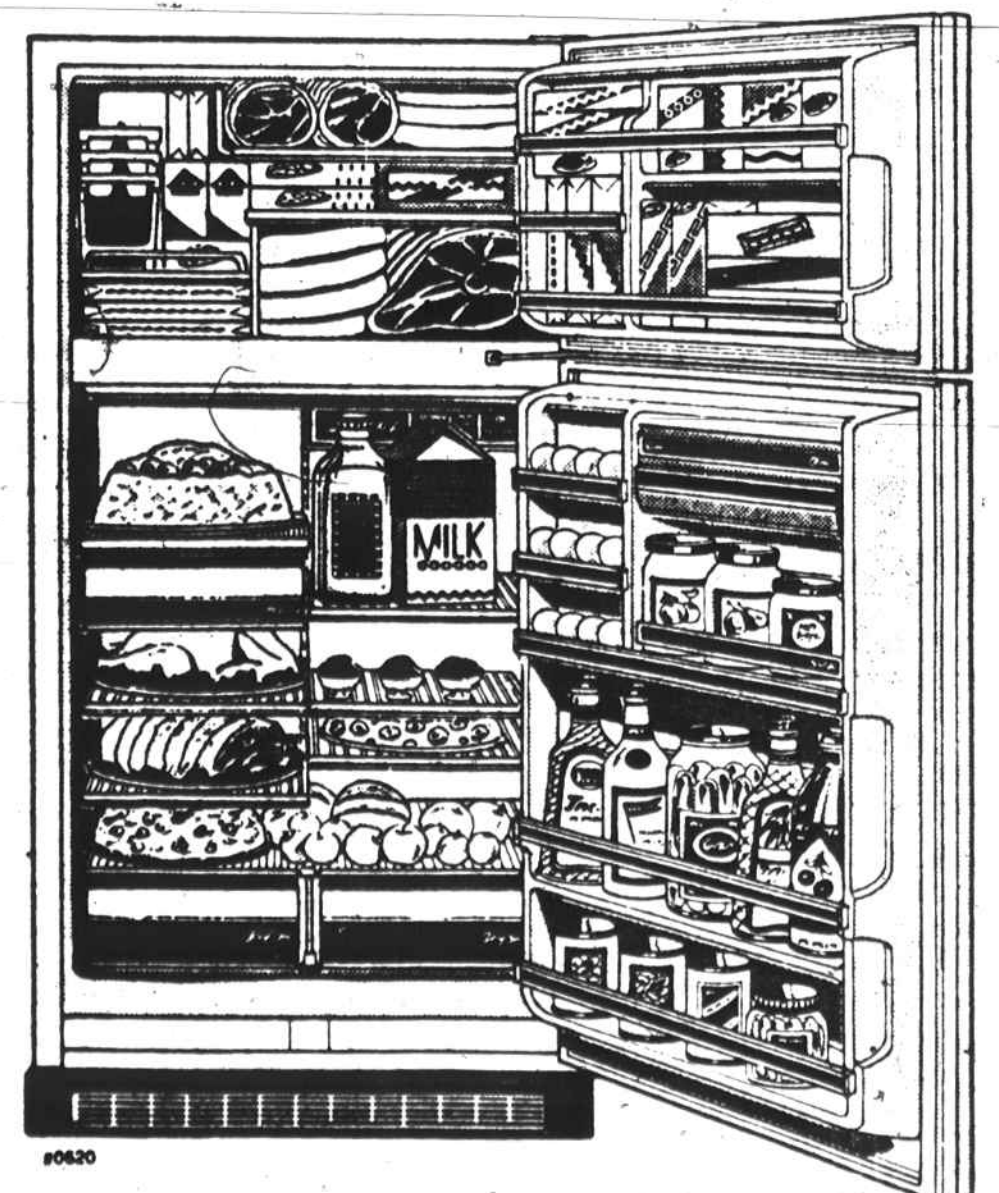
Reg. 449.95. Sale 374.95. Time and temperature microwave, #5880

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naomi's view

Sometimes, a secretary in spite of thorough training forgets the importance of accuracy and the meaning of a good business letter.

A business letter is a good letter when it achieves the result at which it is aimed. Unless it collects the bill, answers the question, makes the adjustment, sells the goods or produces a mental attitude which leads to a sale, it is not a good letter, no matter how attractive its arrangement or how perfect its grammar may be.

To be a successful office worker, rest assured that one of the qualifications you need to develop is the ability to write business letters and write them in a human, interesting, and forceful way. Letters are the shuttles that fly back and forth to weave the web of commerce.

Remember that the secretary is a secretary because she has the ability to sit down at her typewriter and compose letters that will favorably represent her employer to the outside world. When she writes such letters, she is doing work that is productive.

Accuracy comes first. The secretary is accurate in everything she does; she is accurate in the larger aspects of her work, as well as in the small details. She checks and rechecks the business data she receives or which she herself prepares.



Naomi C. McLean

She takes nothing for granted; she makes sure that the job on which she is engaged is done accurately. If it is a part of her duty to take care of the personal checkbook of her superior, she does that work accurately. She makes out the stubs accurately; she makes all the additions and subtractions accurately; she writes all the checks accurately; she goes over the paid checks returned by the bank and then compares the balance shown by the bank with the balance in the checkbook; she knows how to make reconciliation of a checking account. If she also keeps the personal accounts of her employer, she keeps those accounts accurately. She sets up a system by which she can record all figures correctly. There is no quality in business that is more important than accuracy.

Business is a vast web of related transactions. If an error is made somewhere along the line, that error will reproduce itself over and over again. Students who are in training now or soon will be need to put their mind on the job of working accurately. Check everything you do before you hand it in.