

# black business

## Business Of The Week

### Where Barbering Is An Art Form

By ROBIN ADAMS  
Staff Writer

"Being a barber is similar to being an artist," says Bracy Bonham Jr., one of the "artists" at the Rite Spot Barber Shop on 14th Street. "An artist works with canvas and creates a 'Mona Lisa.' I work with hair and I create styles."

Bonham adds, "Anybody can cut hair. But everybody can't be an artist, because it is difficult to do and takes time to learn."

Bonham, his younger brother Kenneth, their father, the Rev. Bracy Bonham -- who is the owner and manager of the shop -- and a close family friend, Frank Linton, have been in the business for 30 years. At first, the two younger Bonhams shined shoes in their father's shop, which was on Fifth Street next to an old meat house.

"But when we grew up and went to school, we came into the business," Bracy Bonham Jr. says. "This is a family business and we grew up with the attitude that we always wanted to do something positive with our lives."

"We get our drive from our father and our mother has always been there to hold us together. We are here in the community trying to set an example of what can be done with the help and guidance of the Lord."

He adds, "We are trying to establish a leadership role in this community. And in order to be both a barber and an asset to the community, you have to work hard at both of them."

Bonham says that the Rite Spot caters to both men and women and specializes in "everything."

"The new style now is the fade-out -- a cut where the sides are cut very close and slightly more is left on top," Bonham says. "I like to cut that kind of style, because it brings out the real talent in the art of barbering."

In addition to being a barber, Bonham also considers himself a "sort of semi-doctor."

"It is necessary to understand the functions of the skin, hair and blood in order to know what you are doing," he says. "If you are not familiar with the skin and hair, it can produce serious problems."

And it takes lots of hard work and many hours of barbering and cosmetology school to be a successful barber, he notes. "My father used to always say, 'Everybody that's in a business can't manage a business and everybody that manages a business can't work in the business.'"

Bonham says that barber shops used to have a bad reputation but he is trying to make Rite Spot a professional business. "You hear a lot of bad things about a barber shop. Long time ago, a barber shop was known as



The Rite Spot Barber Shop has been a family-operated business for more than 30 years. Bracy Bonham Jr., one of the stylists at the shop, cuts the hair of one of his customers. Bonham's father is the owner and manager and his brother is a barber (photo by James Parker).

a gossipy place. But we try to stay away from that," he says.

"When people come to this barber shop, they receive personal attention. From the facials we give to the special way we treat each customer, we strive for individual attention."

*"Everybody that's in a business can't manage a business and everybody that manages a business can't work in the business."*

And Bonham's pleasant smile and immaculately done hair appear to be enough to make any customer feel welcome.

When asked what is the secret to the family's 30 years in business, he says, "Well, we have had our ups and downs, just like anybody else, but we always manage to keep going."

He adds, "Sometimes black businessmen hold

themselves down. They are standing in one spot, marking time, worrying about the plight of the black businessman.

"But it is the desire we have to achieve that keeps us going. If you do your work and know that what you are doing is good and it is thorough, then your reputation for good work will follow you. People want service and they want good service. They want to look good and feel good about themselves. And that's what we try to do here."

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- Punch Cups
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- Napkins
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## Business People

### Banner Graduates

**RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK** — Winston-Salem native Purcell Banner has recently been graduated from an intensive sales training course as the final phase of a 30-week sales representative orientation program at Burroughs Wellcome Co.

Banner received a bachelor's degree in advertising from North Carolina Central University. He will be based in San Jose, Calif.

Burroughs Wellcome Co. researchers, develops and manufactures pharmaceutical products for human and animal use. The

company's corporate headquarters and research laboratories are in Research Triangle Park.

#### Carnation Promotes Bentley

Kenneth Bentley has been promoted to Manager of Urban Relations for Carnation Co., replacing J. Edward Atkinson, who retired Feb. 1.

Bentley joined Carnation in July 1983 as an associate manager of urban relations. He was previously a senior account executive for the Phillips Organisation in San



Purcell Banner

Kenneth Bentley

Diego and a Los Angeles area marketing manager for Anheuser Busch Inc. Bentley received his bachelor's degree from the University of California at

Irvine in 1973 and a master's degree in management and business administration from the University of Redlands in 1982.

## Reynolds Industries Reports Record Business With Minorities

R.J. Reynolds Industries Inc. purchased a record \$87 million in goods and services from minority suppliers during 1982, and launched a series of seminars to attract additional business from minority businesses nationwide.

Company purchases from minority vendors increased \$6 million during the last year, and have risen substantially since 1975, when such purchases totaled \$3 million.

Marshall B. Bass, vice president of Reynolds, said the company is "committed to establishing meaningful business relationships with minority and women ven-

dors. We believe that major companies must take an active part in strengthening such businesses, and that it is in our own interest to do so."

Purchases by the company include general contracting and oilfield supplies, transport services, tobacco leaf, raw food products and a wide range of other goods and services, Bass said. R.J. Reynolds advertises in approximately 100 minority newspapers.

Since 1969, when R.J. Reynolds formalized a minority business enterprise program, the company and its subsidiaries have aggressively sought out and purchased goods and ser-

vices from minority vendors "where prices, quality of service and timeliness of delivery are competitive," Bass explained.

Last year, the company launched a series of seminars for minority and women suppliers "to help ensure that minorities and women are given an opportunity to sell us the goods and services we need," Bass said. The first seminar, held in Winston-Salem, drew more than 130 suppliers from seven states. Other seminars are scheduled this year in major locations across the United States.

Also in 1982, the company signed an agreement with four black-owned in-

urance firms for employee group life insurance. Nearly \$400 million of life insurance, or about 23 percent of total insurance purchased by the company, is with black-owned firms.

In addition to increasing its volume of minority purchases during 1982, Reynolds increased its line of credit with 52 minority banks from \$10 million to nearly \$15 million. The company hopes to improve the ability of the banks to make loans they otherwise would not make to support minority enterprises in the communities they serve, Bass said.

The company also sup-

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