

black business

Business Of The Week

He Believes In Doing It Right The First Time

By ROBIN ADAMS
Staff Writer

When he sees or thinks about a 1953 Corvette, James Barkley starts to smile.

"I just get excited," Barkley says. "At the time they came out (he was only 9 years old), I really wanted one. And I told myself when I got able to, I was gonna buy one."

Well, Barkley, now 39, never got that 1953 Corvette, but he has a shop full of other cars, all of which he loves dearly.

But the cars at Barkley's Body Shop on Chapel Street are the kind of cars that probably no one else but a body shop proprietor would love.

All of them are wrecked and two of them are older than Barkley. But it'll be only a matter of time before Barkley gives them a new lease on their mechanical lives.

"When a car comes in here wrecked and it leaves out, fixed and shiny, I'm proud," he says.

And making sure that each car leaves in perfect condition is a pet peeve of Barkley's.

"It pays to do a job right the first time. Anytime you have to repeat a job, you are losing money," he says. "If you take a short cut, you will end up spending valuable time trying to make a bad job look good."

Barkley says he firmly believes in doing quality work and the only way to do that is to stay in touch with new technology and products.

"I attend clinics sponsored by various dealers to stay up on the latest techniques and materials in the market," he says. "The clinics are free, and they usually last four or five hours a night. But you always learn something. And that's the only reason I go."

"Sometimes I am the only black down there. But this is my livelihood. So I try to stay on top."

Yet Barkley admits he has not always been such a stickler for quality. "I used to think that you have to buy cheap (products) in order to make money," he says, "But I soon learned that, with a cheap product, you get a cheap job."

Learning those lessons took time. After getting out of the Army, Barkley went to Forsyth Technical Institute and got a degree first in building illustrations and later in auto body repair. He then went to work for two local body repair shops before opening his own place 15 years ago on Trade Street.

"When I started out on Trade Street, I had a shop full of work. And there came a time when all that mattered was getting paid. But when you do that, you overlook things. And instead of making money, I was losing money," he says.

"If you do a fast job, you let a lot of things slip by and people will come back a second time to have the job done right."

Although Barkley's learned his lessons, sometimes he still has to educate his customers. "A lot of times people (black and white) come to me because they think I am cheap and do quick work because I'm black," he says. "But not me. I learned it takes time to do a job right."

Barkley says he owes almost everything he knows to



Barkley And His 'Loves'

James Barkley, owner of Barkley's Body Shop, believes in giving old cars a new lease on life (photo by James Parker).

the other shops he's worked in. In the first shop, he learned how to handle the practical side of the job and in the second shop he learned the business end of the job.

Barkley says he is equipped to handle all body repair work, including painting, without having to contract part of the job to someone else. He also customizes cars, trucks, vans and motorcycles.

And Barkley knows his cars. He can tell you, off the top of his head, when a car was introduced, where you can get a part you need and how much it will cost. He says he knows drivers, too.

Northern drivers, Barkley says, expect to buy a new car every year. "If they wreck it, they get it repaired without too much worry, because they know they will get a new one next year."

"But Southern drivers are fussy about their cars. If you hit it, you gonna pay for it."

And that's where Barkley fits in. "If it wasn't for the independent shops," he says, "the auto industry would be in trouble. And not only do we help them, we also help people. It's a whole lot cheaper to fix a car than it is to buy a new one."

Business People

Firm's Attorney Becomes Officer

ATLANTA -- M. James "Mack" Hunter, general counsel of M&M Products Co., was recently appointed the firm's corporate secretary. Continuing his functions as legal representative, Hunter will serve the 10-year-old hair care products company as an officer, along with four vice presidents. The appointment was announced by the owners of M&M Products, Cornell McBride and Therman McKenzie.



James Hunter

Before joining M&M, Hunter practiced corporate and labor law and handled civil rights litigation. He also served the federal government in numerous official litigation. He was production controller for Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, Ga., from 1968 to 1970, prior to joining the U.S. Equal Employ-

ment Opportunity Commission as an investigator, public relations specialist, decision writer and law clerk in Washington, D.C.

In 1973, Hunter was one of the first attorneys to open the Commission's Atlanta Litigation Center.

He served the center as a senior trial attorney, general supervisory trial attorney, prosecuting civil rights cases on behalf of the federal government. Hunter first represented M&M Products as an attorney in private practice before joining the company in January 1980.

"M&M Products is grateful that Mack Hunter has served this company as legal counsel the last three years," said McBride, president of M&M. "We are honored to have him serve as an officer as we begin a new decade of growth."

Hunter, recipient of the Al Knox Award and Omega Psi Phi Award, is an honor graduate of Fort Valley State College and Howard University Law School. He has been listed in Who's

Who in American Colleges and Universities, and is a member of Alpha Kappa Mu Honor Society and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity.

Warren Appointed

The appointment of Oscar Wesley Warren to the New York regional sales staff of the National Black Network (NBN), was announced recently by George Edwards, president of NBN.

Warren, who has had extensive experience in broadcast media sales, previously was an account executive with WMCA radio, where he specialized on cooperative sales to manufacturers' representatives of national products.

Please see page 22

Urban League's Jacob To Keynote Conference

John Jacob, president of the National Urban League, will be the keynote speaker at the annual National Association of Market Developers awards banquet on Wednesday, May 18, at 8 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville, Ky.

Jacob has worked with the Urban League in several capacities for 17 years. On Feb. 1, 1979, he was named

executive vice president of the Urban League and was named president two years later. He officially assumed that office on Jan. 1, 1982, succeeding Vernon E. Jordan, who presided over the organization for 10 years.

A trained social worker, Jacob has built a reputation as a quiet NUL insider whose talents are for administration and coalition building. He was described

in a recent *Washington Post* article as "the prepared practical tactician."

During the banquet, awards will be presented to the Marketer of the Year, Communicator of the Year and Minority Business of the Year. In addition, the Plan for Progress Award will be given to the corporation that has supported minority businesses and marketing in the black com-

munity.

A reception will be held prior to the banquet at 7 p.m. Banquet tickets are \$50.

The National Association of Market Developers was established in 1953. Its membership is found largely in the areas of sales, sales promotion, advertising and public relations. The annual convention will be held May 16-18 at the Seelbach Hotel.

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