

Chronicle Profile

Opportunity Knocks; He Answers

By **AUDREY L. WILLIAMS**
Staff Writer

When Anthony Wilson walked into Merrill-Lynch over a year ago, a corporate manager caught a glimpse of him talking to a secretary, decided he liked Wilson's looks and hired him as a receptionist.

Today, at 24 years old, Wilson is an account executive with the largest investment firm in the country and the only black in his position in Winston-Salem.

No doubt, the corporate manager, who Wilson says is no longer with the firm, had already made up in his mind that the young Winston-Salem State University senior was just what he was looking for.

Wilson says he had never considered applying for a job at a firm such as Merrill-Lynch, especially since he was only looking for a job to supplement his income while he studied accounting at WSSU in the evenings and share apartment expenses with his brother. But after a pep talk from a friend who also works there, he decided to give it a try.

"The manager at the time saw me talking to his secretary," says Wilson. "She (the secretary) later told me that he had inquired about who I was and that he was interested in me because she said it was something about me he liked.

"Well, I saw this as an opportunity and I kept in contact with the secretary so much that she knew my voice whenever I called," he says.

Wilson's persistence paid off and within three months he had landed the job.

But three years ago, the Reidsville native, who was

then a student at N.C. State University, says he had aspirations of becoming an engineer.

"Once I decided to go to N.C. State, it was a cross between engineering and architecture," he says. "Then I found out I didn't like engineering."

At the time when Wilson realized he didn't want to become an engineer, his brother, who was at WSSU, convinced him to transfer to Winston-Salem and he did. For the time being, though, Wilson has put his studies on the back burner to focus more on his job at Merrill-Lynch.

But how did a receptionist, yet to complete his B.S.

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-- Anthony Wilson

degree, become an account executive?

"Hard work," says Wilson. "The past year, I have devoted quite a bit of my time to this work. I'm hoping my position will encourage other blacks to get into the investment business."

It's a long way to the top, but Wilson says he's determined to get there. And at the rate he's going, the odds are in his favor.

"First, I was a receptionist," he says. "Then I was a broker's assistant and from there a cashier, then back to a broker's assistant."

Now Wilson is brushing elbows with important clients and first-rate executives, and, he adds, "It's



Anthony Wilson is quietly climbing to the top. But while on his way, he hopes to open the door for other blacks who want to enter the investment business (photo by James Parker).

exciting."

The only problem Wilson says he has had to overcome at Merrill-Lynch is his shyness. Unlike many who move fast on the totem pole in corporate structures, Wilson isn't the aggressive type, but rather serene and even soft-spoken.

"As I went along (at Merrill-Lynch), I started doubting myself," says Wilson. "Then I began praying to God.

"I consider myself blessed, but I don't consider myself any better than anyone else or more deserving," he says. "I was just given an opportunity and I

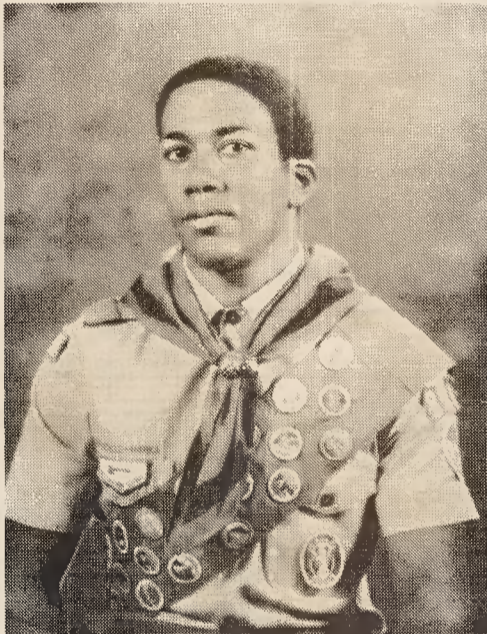
took advantage of it."

As a financial adviser to people who are considering investments, Wilson says he has made an observation about the black community.

"Blacks tend to back off when they hear the name Merrill-Lynch because they've always heard that investment and stocks are very risky business," Wilson says. "Blacks are sort of few and far apart in the investment business and I'm not sure why. But, if I can do my job well, maybe I can open the door for more blacks.

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Eagle Scout Awarded



James O. Gibbs, III

James O. Gibbs III was presented the Eagle Scout Award, scouting's highest honor, on Sunday, Oct. 30 at Zion Hill Baptist Church. The presentation was made by Don Hamrick, executive director; and Francis Carter, president of the Old Hickory Council, during an Eagle Scout Court of Honor held in the church sanctuary.

Gibbs is a junior assistant scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop No. 818 sponsored by Zion Hill Church.

Marshall McDuffie, scoutmaster, opened the ceremony by calling for pastor O.B. Cook to give the invocation. This was followed by the presentation of the colors and a candlelight ceremony featuring the Boy Scouts of America. The Eagle Charge was presented by Lt. Col. Acie McGhee, senior Army instructor, and the benediction was delivered by the Rev. Belvin Jessup, pastor

Milford, Mass. and progressing to his present involvement with Troop No. 818.

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Clevenger of Jacksonville, who was born without eyes. When she was seven weeks old, her eyes were opened for their daily cleaning and to her mother's surprise there were two brown eyes.

•The Human Betterment League of N.C. will be holding its annual meeting from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Holiday Inn West. Dr. C. Nash Herndon, professor emeritus of Medical Genetics at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, will be the guest speaker.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

•All churches interested in forming a team in the Church Basketball League are urged to meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Patterson Avenue Branch YMCA for organizational plans.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10

•The newly formed Bach Aria Group of the North Carolina School of the Arts will present its debut performance at 8:15 p.m. in Crawford Hall on the NCSA campus. For more information call 721-1945.

•A Weekday Open Basketball League will be formed and all persons interested in joining are asked to meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Patterson Avenue YMCA. For more information call 724-9205.

•Drama juniors from the North Carolina School of the Arts will present the world premiere of "The Willard Case," by Louise Conkling at 8:15 p.m. at the NCSA Sound Studio at Vintage and Main Streets.

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