

# CEO says pressure from big firms won't slow Golden State's growth

By MARDELL GRIFFIN  
Chronicle Staff Writer

Although most African-American-owned insurance companies are hard hit by aggressive affirmative action programs conducted by large corporations in recent years, the chairman and chief executive officer of Golden State Mutual says his company is thriving.

Ivan J. Houston, Golden State's CEO, said there are only "a few" minority-owned insurance companies nationwide that can perform competitively in the current market. And those companies, including the one he heads, are the ones who have identified their market and built a strong company infrastructure with talented management.

But drafting able managers is not enough. Businesses must provide adequate incentives to keep



Houston

them on company rosters. "We have always emphasized recruiting good management people," Houston said. "And we have kept them by paying competitive salaries and commissions."

Golden State entered North Carolina two years ago through a merger with Winston Mutual Insurance Company, then the second largest African-American-owned insurance company in the state.

Now Golden State is the second largest African-American-owned insurance company in the nation in insurance in force with written policies totaling \$5 billion. In assets, it ranks third among African-American-owned insurance companies in the United States with holdings worth over \$116 million.

"We were fortunate in coming into North Carolina -- in working out a merger and acquiring Winston Mutual," Houston said. "Right now in our company, this is one of our fastest growing areas. I think the future of our company is very good in North Carolina."

The company executive was in

Winston-Salem to attend a reception and open house held in Golden State's newly-renovated offices in the old Winston Mutual building at 1225 E. Fifth St.

Golden State had originally planned to sell the Fifth Street property which was run down and in need of repair and remodeling at the time of the merger. But public opinion persuaded them to retain ownership of the structure.

About 100 people joined Houston to inspect the face lift given the interior of the 18-year-old East Winston landmark and attend the reception honoring Eddie I. Stanton.

Stanton took over as manager of Golden State's local district operation in April. Winston-Salem is included in the district which is roughly bounded by Mebane, Statesville, Rural Hall and Lexington.

The third floor offices also house the company's regional organization that directs operations for the entire state. William Fulton is regional manager for Golden State.

Fulton is a familiar face in the office, counting the years he spent with Winston Mutual before the merger, he has been with Golden State for 27 years.

When he took the job with Winston Mutual over 25 years ago, Fulton said he only wanted something that would pay him enough money "to get to Africa." At the time he pictured all insurance agents as "old married men."

"I just took the job to show them you could be young and unmarried and be in insurance," he said to his company's top officer. "I haven't quit yet."

Fulton escorted some visitors on a tour of the spruced up facility

and pointed out computers that link the local affiliate with the company's national headquarters in Los Angeles.

The first phase of the remodeling project included the second and third floors of the structure. "Eventually the whole building will be renovated," Fulton said. Exterior and interior refurbishment is scheduled for completion within the next year.

A guest book containing signatures of some of the visitors at Sunday's function included the names of Rep. Logan Burke and his wife, Northeast Ward Alderman Vivian H. Burke; East Ward Alderman Virginia K. Newell, who represented the mayor's office; C.A. McLean, NAACP state director; Marshall Bass of RJR; and former North Ward Alderman Larry Little.

## Jackson

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A \$150 billion drug industry is operating "right up under our faces," he said, calling for a reinforced U.S. Coast Guard, expanded drug enforcement agencies, and increased drug education programs.

"The government can cut the supply (of drugs), but the people must be willing to not take it," he added. (Earlier at A&T, he told students that the present threat was not from rope-wielding Klu Klux Klansmen in hooded sheets but it is from "the hood who sells dope.")

Under President Reagan, construction of "affordable housing" has dropped by 80 percent, which he wants to see turned around, he said.

He is also committed to increasing money for education. It costs less than \$30,000 for a full four-year academic scholarship to

most public universities, he said, while the same amount of time in a penitentiary racks up a public bill of \$140,000. "It is bad judgement to cut funds to support education," he said.

And farmers are high on his list of those in need of a helping hand from the government.

He called on people with differences to meet on "common ground."

"If we must fight," he said summing up his stand on various issues, "let's fight at the plant gate where the gates were closed on workers without even giving them notice, and at schools where students with good minds and teachers were turned away because of a lack of money, and at farm auctions where farmers, who have fed America and the world, have nowhere else to go and in the

emergency room where an injured person cannot get treatment without a blue or green card to go upstairs to an empty bed that is waiting for a rich person to get sick."

Jackson closed his remarks with appeals for funding in his characteristic evangelical style. "Friends, we need -- right now -- money to keep us going," he said.

Jackson has not selected any possible running mates if he takes the Democratic nomination. "It's really too early for that -- it really is," he told the Chronicle after the luncheon.

Jackson ended the event posing for pictures with his supporters and autographing copies of his book, *Straight from the Heart*, that were made available for sale as fund raisers by the Rainbow Coalition.



"Atta boy"

Herbert Stephens chats with his son, Derrick, at the Shilohian-St. Peter's Family Center program held Aug. 14. Derrick presented one of the program's addresses at the event. The program was held to recognize the support of family and volunteers during the summer camp program (photo by James

## Rann

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advises the governor on issues relating to minorities, as well as develops programs and makes recommendations for boards and commissions. He also serves as a liaison to community groups and professional associations.

Rann earned his undergraduate degree in political science from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1974. He received his law degree from Howard University's School of Law in 1977.

He was enrolled in the master's of public affairs program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro from 1981 to 1983.

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