



The Rev. John Mendez addresses members of the first graduating class of the Urban League's banking industry course during ceremonies held last week (photo by Santana).

Banking program graduates 8

By KENNETH RAYMOND
Chronicle Staff Writer

Graduates of the Urban League Bank Training Program were encouraged to boldly climb the banking industry's mountain of success and cling to their hopes of achievement by the fiery words of guest speaker Rev. John Mendez during the graduation ceremony Friday.

The Bank Training Program, which started March 29, was a three-week series of workshops and seminars, which dealt with different aspects of the banking business, sponsored by the Urban League. It was organized to train students in such areas as teller training, customer service, and security procedures.

Following the welcome address and opening remarks, Mendez, who is the pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, outlined the life of Francis Mizzell, a former Afro-American resident of Winston-Salem and employee of Wachovia Bank and Trust. He used events of her life to help encourage the students to achieve all they can.

"The best thing a person can do when traveling down a particular road is to learn about the road from someone who's already traveled it," he said. "There are several things we can learn from Mizzell's life that will not only help us to be better people, but will help inspire you to be anything you want to be in the banking business."

Mendez said that the students should never let anything hinder them from striving.

"Mizzell was went through school wearing hand-me-downs and had to deal with making it with the second best of everything she needed. Then had to work her way through college," he said. "Never let anyone tell you that things are fixed a certain way and nothing can be done to change them. You don't have to stay poor because of current circumstances and situa-

tions," he continued.

Mendez, who also attended Morehouse College, said that a thirst for practical knowledge is essential.

"You must work to get your education so that your education can work for you," he said. "No one should be satisfied with remaining where they are. While working there, they should take time to learn how things work in the offices upstairs so they can move into them someday."

Mendez also said that the students should be prepared to struggle if circumstances call for it.

"Equality is not fully a reality in this world," he said. "You must be willing to fight for what you want or someone will take it away from you."

Mendez ended by saying that after the students have reached their goals, they must be willing to help someone else make it up the ladder.

"Don't ever get so big headed that you don't want to help anyone else," he said. "Mizzell worked her way to senior portfolio manager of a bank in Atlanta and is very active in her community. If one of us makes it, then he can help another one."

The eight graduates, who are also the program's first graduating class, were then awarded their certificates followed by closing remarks.

Bessie Singletary, program trainer and coordinator, said that the program was very successful and will continue to operate quarterly.

"They were exposed to a lot of the banking industry," she said. "They'll have an edge over a lot of others who want to get into the business."

Representatives from Wachovia Bank and Trust, First Citizens, and First Union conducted workshops. The students were also taken on tours of the different banks.

Several of the graduates said that they believed they could operate in a bank effectively if they were hired soon.

"We learned so much from Miss Singletary and the guest speakers that I think we all could walk into any bank and begin working," said 22-year-old Carla Johnson.

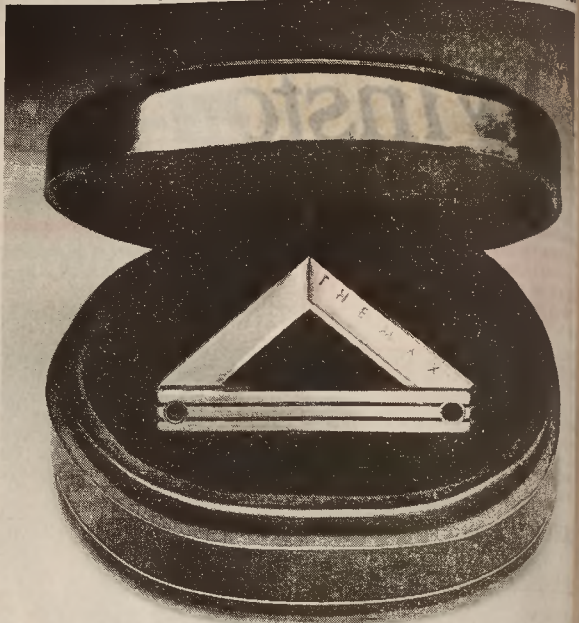
"I think they did a very thorough job on us," said 21-year-old Preston Mack. "I don't think there's anything on an entry level we can't do."

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Robinson opposes state lottery

State Senate candidate Vernon L. Robinson will appeal to the local ministers' conference not to support any candidates favoring a state lottery at a press conference at 11 a.m. at First Baptist Church, April 26.

First, lotteries are only high revenue producing policy measures in the short run. As the initial excitement wanes, more advertising dollars are required to generate the same amount of tickets sold previously.

Also, the lottery is a regressive tax that disproportionately falls on

low income families since they are the major consumers of lottery tickets. Worst, the revenue generated by a lottery is not returned to those consumers on a need basis nor in proportion to the incidence of the tax. Rather that revenue will likely be spent on middle class programs.

Finally, the values reflected in lottery advertising would promote immediate gratification instead of hard work for success. As such, it promotes a value system that encourages drug abuse, teen pregnancy and crime.

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