

# Business Briefs

*Couple gives back to its senior supporters*

## Triad Pest Control gets rid of what's bugging you

By PATRICIA SMITH-DEERING  
Community News Editor

Spring is a time for cleaning out those basements and attics. It's also the time when those tiny creatures that have lain dormant through the winter become active making life at home less than comfortable. James "Bo" and Marilyn Gilliam have just the solution with their nine-year-old firm, Triad Pest Control.

Gilliam, president of the firm, was working for a local pest control company, when in 1982, he decided it was time for him to venture out into his own business. "They (the company) were making pretty good revenue," he said. He couldn't see why he shouldn't do the same. "He's always wanted to go into business for himself," his wife and vice president of Triad added.

There was an additional reason that the Gilliams saw the need for their business, particularly in the African-American community. "I saw how (other companies) would come into the black community and charge more," he said, adding, "I figured they needed a black in the area to offer service at a fair price." With that in mind, he quit his job and with "\$25 that I borrowed from my daddy to open a checking account," he recalled, he got started. "I remember it was a Saturday," he said, "She (Marilyn) was away at the time." Although he had not told her that he was going to resign right then, when she found out, she was a firm supporter. He said, "She told me, 'I'm behind you.' When she said that, . . . that meant a lot."

Since that time, the two have worked together to build the busi-

ness which customizes its services for the growing number of residential and commercial clients that it has. "We've been blessed," Marilyn said, "never having to get a loan from the bank." The profits were

position as a city/county personnel specialist. In 1986 she accepted a position as personnel director for Catawba County, and Bo traveled between his business in Winston-Salem and their new home. "We

returned to Winston-Salem in 1988, and Marilyn joined Triad fulltime. "I think that the only way I could have come fulltime with him was to have had the time to pursue my career. I went the limit of what I wanted to do before joining him," she said.

Remembering with a smile how her husband got started, Marilyn said, "He's very good in sales. It was himself and a blue Volkswagen (working) from the basement of our home." The Volkswagen was traded for a white Ford Ranger. Now, Triad has five technicians and a secretary. Bo, who is also a technician, said he is also "salesperson and bill collector."

Bo believes that dressing for success has been an important contributor to the growth of his clientele over the years. "I looked sharp, people trusted that uniform," he said. "I talked to people, they felt the warmth." In the beginning he knocked on many doors, some for customers who knew him in his previous job. "It was that blue and white uniform that worked," he said with a broad grin. His customers are not limited to the African-American community and are evenly split between residences and commercial firms.

"Personally, I don't think it matters if you're black or white in a service-oriented business," Bo said. Believing that often race is used as an excuse that can handicap a person, he reasoned, "It's the way you present yourself. Prejudice will be out there, it will never die."

The couple is thankful for the support they have received from the senior citizens in the African-American community. "We give the black

community a lot of credit," said Marilyn.

Every year Triad offers a month of free pest control service to the senior citizens in the community. She explained, "He (Bo) feels that's a way we give back to the community . . . You can't beat that by giving to those senior citizens. It makes me feel good." The couple also credits a number of the area churches for sticking by them in business and encouraging, including their own, United Metropolitan Baptist Church, pastored by the Reverend J. Donald Ballard.

One of the community services

that Bo and Marilyn sponsor is a "Pest of the Week" advertising spot on radio station WSMX. This week's pest, Bo said, is the tick, very prevalent this time of year, particularly in North Carolina. He cautioned people to be acutely aware that they cause Rocky Mountain fever (which can be fatal).

Triad Pest Control is located in a neat, two-story, sky-blue frame house at 1535 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. You can reach Bo and Marilyn in their offices there or on (919) 788-3020. They have a North Carolina Watts line, 1-800-TRIAD-99.



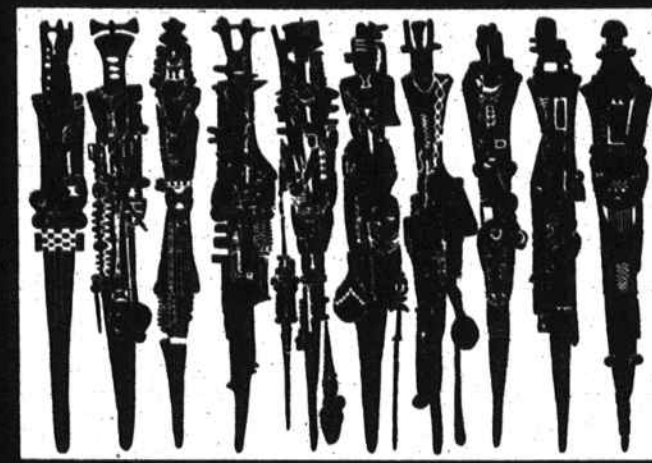
Photo by L.B. Speas Jr.  
"Bo" and Marilyn Gilliam have turned a \$25 venture into a successful pest control company — Triad.

simply returned to the business.

Initially, she was working only parttime in the firm, handling the paperwork while maintaining a

made an agreement when she accepted the job there that we'd go for two years," he said. "I was very supportive of her career." They

## PORT OF AFRICA



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### Reinvestments in the Community

#### Diggs Gallery exhibitions are enriching

By PATRICIA SMITH-DEERING  
Community News Editor

In a city known nationally for its commitment to the arts, the Diggs Gallery, located on the campus of Winston-Salem State University, offers a contemporary showcase for some of the finest artistic works in the country.

The gallery was named for James Thackeray Diggs Jr., former chairman of the art department and a professor emeritus. He taught at WSSU for more than 40 years before his retirement in 1979.

Diggs, who died in April 1989, was also co-founder of the Associate Arts of Winston-Salem and helped establish what is now the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, SECCA.

The first exhibition featured large pencil drawings by Glenda Wharton-Little, a Winston-Salem artist and sculptor. The drawings were created for an ancient African folktale she has illustrated, "The Children and the Sun: A Bushman Tale." Also featured were large color photographs from the Elison Archives at the Smithsonian Institution, depicting African tribal life. A

25-piece retrospective of Diggs's works was on display which included abstract paintings, landscape watercolors, etchings, and drawings.

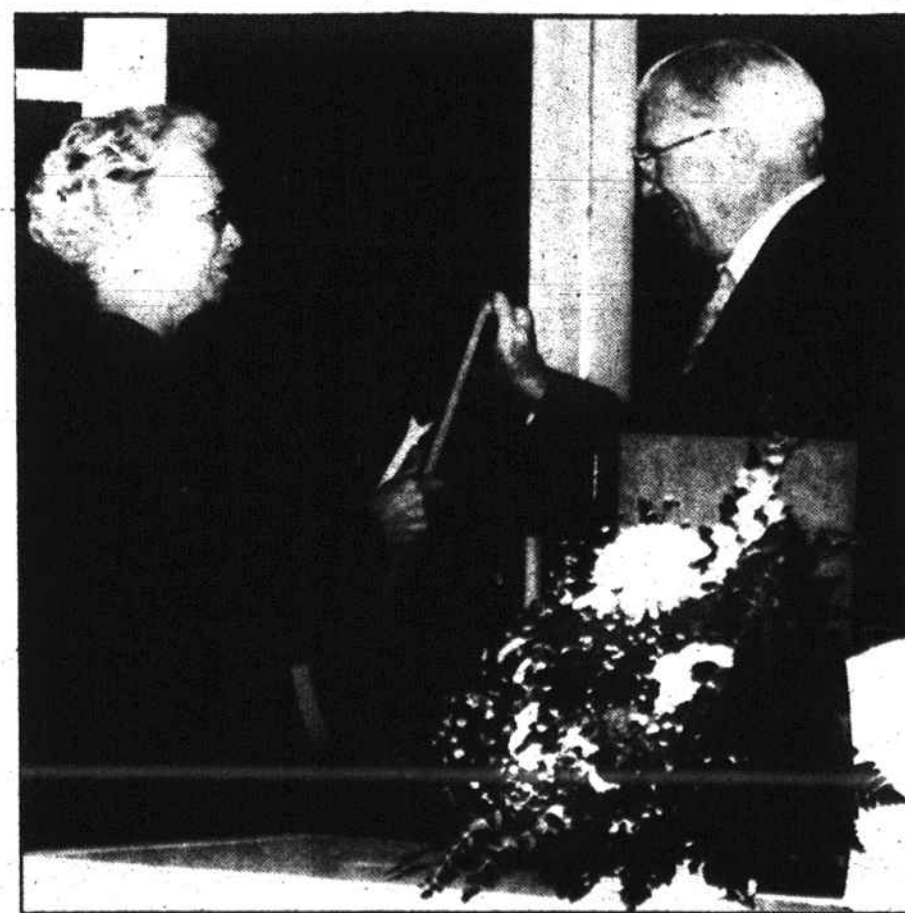
Two historic exhibitions that recreated the history of the African-

"We've Come This Far By Faith: A Historical View of the Black Church in Forsyth County" was an exhibition curated by Winston-Salem Delta Fine Arts, Inc. Delta Fine Arts and the Diggs Gallery co-presented both exhibitions.

The current spring exhibition features the works of three well-known artists, two of them from Winston-Salem. "The Spirit of Myth" by Mark Rothko, early paintings from the 1930s and 1940s, is on loan to the gallery from the National Gallery of Art until June 30.

Sketches from the mural that John Biggers is designing for the Winston-Salem State University campus are on display. And "Geometric Nature of Life," the dramatic drawings and paintings of Jim Biggers, are on exhibition. The showings run through June 30.

At the gala gallery opening last October, Mitzi Shewmake, a WSSU art professor and the gallery director, said, "It's taken nearly 20 years to see this become a reality and now that it is, the community and people from all over should take advantage of what we have here now and in future exhibitions." She added, "It's simply magnificent and an asset for the university."



Mary L. Diggs accepts tribute from arts patron, Gordon Hanes, at opening of gallery dedicated to her late husband, James Thackeray Diggs Jr.

American churches were featured from January 3-February 3. "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1740-1877" was an exhibition that examined the beginnings of African-American churches and was organized by the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Museum in Washington, D.C.



"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications throughout the USA.