

# Blacks discriminated against at Montgomery GMAC, according to EEOC investigation

By Linn Washington Jr.

Racist employment practices pervade the Montgomery, Ala. office of GM's auto credit financing arm, GMAC, according to findings released this summer by the federal EEOC.

"Blacks as a class were discriminated against in terms of conditions of employment, training and promotions," stated the EEOC investigative findings in the cases of four former black employees of the Montgomery GMAC office.

The EEOC findings have an ominous dimension because these four black employees testified at the 1995 trial of a black GM dealer in Tuskegee, Ala. who presented chilling evidence of deliberate acts of financial sabotage by top GM officials that drove

him out of business.

This dealer, Charles Bell, won a \$26 million jury verdict against GM in 1995. Trial evidence included presenting a sophisticated computer analysis of 200,681 GMAC credit transactions documenting how Bell's customers were rejected by Montgomery GMAC officials who approved identically ranked applicants at nearby White dealers.

Bell's verdict is now being appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court. It is unclear whether the discrimination found by the EEOC is related to testimony at Bell's trial.

GM spokespersons dispute the federal EEOC's investigative findings, contending in a written statement that its own internal corporate investigation into the charges made by the four GMAC employees

"revealed no evidence of discrimination."

The auto giant is mired in a nationwide controversy about serious problems in its Minority Dealer Development Program.

This is a program devised to increase the number of non-White GM dealers. Yet, after 25 years of operation only 1.3 percent of GM's 8,234 dealerships are black-owned, the smallest percentage of any American auto manufacturer.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson and his Rainbow-PUSH Coalition are closely examining charges leveled against GM's minority dealer program by ex-participants and current dealers.

Numerous problems within GM's program were detailed in a recent Gannett newspaper investigative article that described top GM executives liberally

using the "N-word" and treating many black GM dealers in a discriminatory manner that includes "an uneven level of financial support."

GM spokespersons say "there are no records" of how many minorities have participated in the Minority Dealer Development Program or records on how many program participants who were placed in dealerships are still in business.

The Gannett article states that the program is "littered with financial failures."

Ugly details about misdeeds by top GM executives in Alabama and Detroit are contained in court documents from Bell's case and in a separate lawsuit now pending against the auto giant filed by a Mobile, Ala. businessman named Douglas Hill.

## GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY NEWS SUBMISSIONS

News about what happens on a neighborhood or community level, developing issues, the accomplishments of our hometown people, social events, and happenings that would be shared by locals at the general store or the diner in a smaller town — these are the flesh and bones of a community newspaper. They are *The Chronicle's* substance and reason for being.

As our paper expands, we expect to receive more community news from new readers. It is our goal to use news of this kind that will be interesting and important to all our readers. To this end, we offer the following guidelines to help you, the reader, also be a participant.

### 1. Submissions should be newsworthy and timely.

News is about events that are of some interest to the general readership. An article about an event that is in the past is best submitted as soon as possible after the event. An article published June 26 about an event that occurred May 15 isn't really "news."

2. Be objective. News is composed of checkable facts, not opinions. If a submission about a luncheon is 70 percent about how attendees felt or how delicious the food was, it will probably be cut by 70 percent. How attendees felt cannot be checked, and how delicious the food was is a matter of opinion. A specific person, however, may be quoted as saying he or she felt honored to be there, and that the food was delicious.

3. Write in third person. If an article in the paper reads "We won first prize at regionals," the reader has no way of knowing to whom "we" refers. It is better to say "Boy Scout Troop 219 won first place at the regionals." Likewise, "Everyone is invited" is preferred to "You are invited."

4. Be complete. News pieces should answer five basic questions: Who? What? When? Where? and Why? For instance, the Moose Lodge held a barbecue Saturday at the fairgrounds to benefit the orphans' home.

5. Make it legible. Because many readers may not have access to a computer or typewriter, handwritten submissions are accepted if they are clearly written on standard-size paper. Index cards, church bulletins and newspaper clippings will not be accepted.

6. Leave your number. For a variety of reasons, the staff may have to contact the person who submitted the article. The name, daytime phone number and evening phone number of the person who wrote the article, or another person who knows enough about the event to be helpful, must be included on each submission.

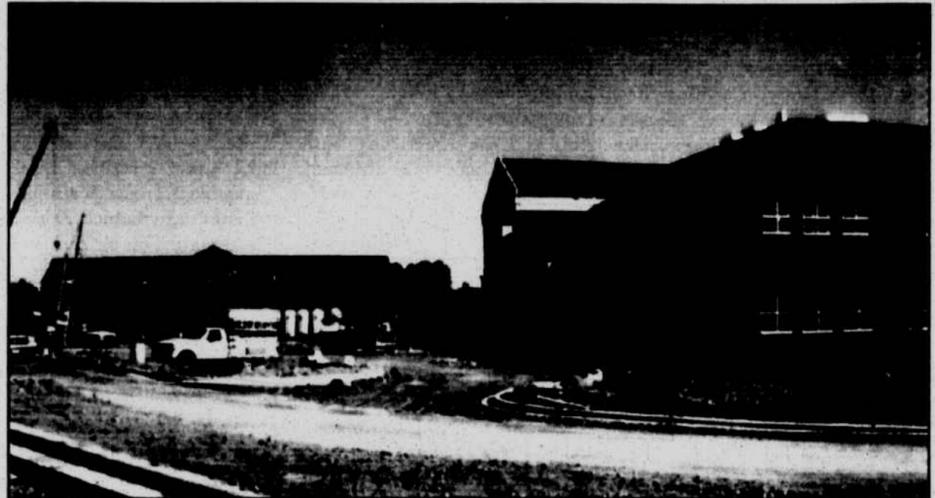
7. Beat the deadline. The community news deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. However, if space demands that something be left out, news that comes in latest is most likely to be omitted. Therefore, sooner is better. All pieces submitted after the deadline will be held over for consideration in the next issue.

8. Remember, it's a newspaper. The Chronicle must adhere to certain rules of journalism. All material is made to conform to those rules as far as possible; therefore, articles will rarely if ever appear exactly as written. If a submission cannot be edited to conform to standards, it will be omitted.

Following are some examples of what is *not* news:

- advertising for a for-profit enterprise
- philosophic or religious opinions
- thank you notes
- personal complaints

9. Be patient. As is evident in corrections that sometimes appear in *The Chronicle*, the staff is human and makes mistakes. Mistakes are not the result of careless disregard for the facts or mischievous intent. The Chronicle will make every attempt to correct misinformation.



The new Forsyth Tech Center (foreground) and the Mazie Woodruff Library (background) are at the corner of Carver Road and Lansing Drive.

## Forsyth Tech to hold community forum on new media center at Carver High

Forsyth Technical Community College will hold a community forum Monday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. in the Media Center at Carver High School. The purpose of the forum is to provide an update on the progress of the center, the projected opening date and the types of course offerings that will be available.

Community members are

encouraged to bring their questions and requests for specific courses and other educational offerings to the meeting. Representing the college at the forum will be Desna L. Wallin, president; Marvin Allen, dean of Business Technologies; Lin Fain, dean of Arts and Sciences; T. Glen Fleeman, executive vice president of Instruction; Ken Jarvis, VP of

Business Services; and Rose Johnson, VP of Corporate and Continuing Education. Representing the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools dual enrollment option for high school students will be Jim Wilhelm, assistant superintendent.

For information contact Sally Hutslar at 723-0371, ext. 7377.

## CAVANAGH

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paigned on his behalf — Melvin Scales and William Andrews — Cavanagh tried to make peace with the black community. That he apologized was enough to satisfy Vernon Robinson, an African American recently elected to the city's board of aldermen.

"I think he took full responsibility for his actions, and he plans to put procedures in place to prevent this from happening again," Robinson said. "We've got to move on."

Cavanagh said that when he takes office next month, he'll make sure that a background check is done on any group that invites him to speak or attend its function.

Although several blacks are ready to overlook Cavanagh's *faux pas*, the incident is one which ought to concern white people more, suggests Bill Tatum, president of the Forsyth Chapter of the NAACP.

"I think we as African Americans shouldn't have to address this issue," Tatum said. "We have tried to improve race relations in this city. Now the white community should address

it. They need to be asking themselves how does this mayor fit into their program."

According to Tatum, black residents of Winston-Salem "are not putting a lot of stock behind this" because they have more important issues to consider. He said the black community is trying "to channel its energy into more positive initiatives," like economic development, jobs, educating children and housing. Consequently, it serves no good purpose to focus on negative incidents such as saluting the rebel flag.

Like Cavanagh, Tatum questions the Journal's motives for playing up the story. "It seems that the paper may be perpetuating something that is not really important to the community," he said.

Brown, for example, said she was not personally offended.

"I think the whole thing raises questions about his capability, about his ability to think things through. But I'm not really offended, because I know how life in America is, Brown said. "I know how people think and how they think about other people. These things happen. I am going to keep my eye on things, though."

## MILLIGAN

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appeared to be a good fit for an agency embroiled in a federal investigation.

The agency administers more than \$32 million in public money and oversees about 5,000 housing units.

Early on, Milligan spoke of public housing residents as customers, and they apparently were getting used to his service.

"I think it's a bad thing, because people have so much hope now. When they think about what's going to happen in Ponce, they think about Art," said Margaret Butler, program coordinator for the Tampa police sector office in College Hill and Ponce de Leon.

"Now the bad news: He's leaving."

Warren, hired in July as general deputy executive director at \$70,000, oversees internal audit-

ing, management information systems and human resources at the agency. She was formerly a HUD troubleshooter for problem-plagued agencies and prior to that, she worked on the staff of the U.S. Senate Housing Subcommittee.

Warren, 30, will inherit an agency that's in the sixth month of a federal audit. Auditors are looking at spending practices under former executive director Audley Evans. Auditors are looking at contracting and procurement practices, and there is no indication when the auditors might be finished or what the results might be.

In his short time, Milligan also found favor with the local city administration. "The city felt very comfortable with Art at the helm of THA. We were quite encouraged that we would be able to have a very good partnership," said Fernando Noriega, the city's director of business and community services.

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