

Jackson: "I Was Never Fulfilled Working For Others"

By Loretta Manago
Post Staff Writer

Working for others always managed to leave Joan Jackson with a feeling of incompleteness. "I've always wanted to have that independence that is associated with being your own boss. Somehow, I was never fulfilled working for others."

When she and her partner Brenda Smith opened Just Chocolates nearly two years ago, Ms. Jackson knew that she had found what she had been looking for in a career. Just Chocolates, a homemade chocolate candy store, is located in the Douglas International Airport.

"During the time my partner and I were considering opening a business in the airport, we knew it had to be something different and something special that most airports didn't have and that's how we came up with the candy store. Our first idea was to sell pre-packaged candies but that would have been competitive with Dobb's House, a major airport business enterprise. So, then we decided to market freshly packaged candies."

However, there was more to Just Chocolates than developing the idea. In order to be considered for a location in the airport, both Ms. Jackson and Ms. Smith had to "put together an indepth proposal and present their idea to the City Council and Dobb's House for approval."

In April of '81 Just Chocolates was in business. Personally, for Ms. Jack-



Joan Jackson
.....Candy store operator

son, the store has been "like therapy." That first year, most of the chocolates were bought from other companies. But things changed the next year. "I really wasn't satisfied with the way some of the candies tasted. I felt that I knew what a 'good chocolate' should taste like, so I decided to start making the chocolate myself."

With no formal training in the art of making chocolates, Ms. Jackson went out, bought a cookbook and began making the chocolates for her company.

"Everything I learned about making chocolates, I learned from my own mistakes and from books." From the volume of requests for chocolates that the business receives, there must not have been that many mistakes. "We receive requests from all over the world, Hawaii, Germany, you name it. Our most demanded chocolate is our fudge."

What Ms. Jackson has also discovered is that she has developed a passion for making candy. "I really enjoy it and when I get feedback that others enjoy

the candies as well, well that really makes me happy."

That feedback has grown to such overwhelming proportions that soon Ms. Jackson and her partner will be opening their second Just Chocolates store in the Latta Arcade in April. "When this store opens we won't be limited to what we sell; we'll be able to expand our merchandise to include cookies and pre-packaged candies. It's like a dream come true," exclaimed Ms. Jackson.

In addition to Just Chocolates, Ms. Jackson is involved in another business, J. E. Jackson and Associates which handles accounts and advertising needs for businesses and arranges parties for record companies and individuals.

A graduate of A&T State University, Ms. Jackson advises young people who are considering going into business for themselves to start taking economics and business courses as early as junior high school. "Finish your education, in the long run, it pays off. When you start your own business, it'll be hard, but

keep at it."


Ms. Jackson's ideas of honesty and hard work come from her mother, Gertrude Jackson, whom Ms. Jackson attributes to be the single influential person in her life. "My mom gave me the insight to look at life realistically and to deal with people openly."

A single parent, Ms. Jackson now passes on those same attitudes to her five year-old son, Leonard Eugene. A lot of what she is

working for today is so that he can have a brighter tomorrow.

Her views on Black History Month praises the occasion as well as those special achievers: "I feel that it is good to set aside a month to honor blacks; however, I also feel that blacks should consider themselves outstanding at all times. Without a doubt, our accomplishments have been superior!"

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