

Reading Boosts Businessman's Life

Special To The Post
When James Underwood tells prison parolees and problem teens they have the power to change their own lives, he speaks from experience.

Six years ago, the 51-year-old Charlotte businessman couldn't read. He had spent most of his life driving trucks or working as a janitor. But last month, he was honored at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, D.C., as one of the nation's nine Outstanding Adult Learners for 1989 from among 307 nominees nationwide.

"It was beyond my wildest dreams to even think of going to Washington and see the things I saw," said the owner of Underwood Cleaning Service. "I was like a kid with a new toy. I just can't explain all the changes in my feelings."

Underwood was chosen by the National Adult and Continuing Education Week Committee from among 307 nominees nationwide. The fourth of 13 farm children, Underwood spent more time working his family's farm than he did going to school. When he ended his formal education after the eighth grade, he could read very little. Nevertheless, he started his own cleaning service in 1978.

One of his commercial contracts was with Freedom Mall, where Central Piedmont Community College was preparing to open its first Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) Center in 1983.

Underwood was one of the first to sign up for reading instruction, testing in at a first-grade reading level. For two years, he came twice a week, receiving one-on-one tutoring and working with special computers. Crediting his ability to read, Underwood has more than doubled his business contracts. He now employs nine people and his company operates four vans. He was featured as a successful entrepreneur on WBTV's nationally syndicated "PM Magazine" and in a June 1987 "Money" magazine article.

"I've never felt this good about myself, ever," said Underwood. "That knot of frustration and embarrassment that I had in my stomach all my life is gone."

In 1988, Underwood was awarded the Focus on Leadership Award for Personal Achievement and the Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service. He is a Sunday School teacher and the chairman of the Board of Deacons at Reeder Memorial Baptist Church.

A frequent speaker at ABLE Centers and church and civic groups, Underwood also makes monthly motivational talks to prison parolees.

Nominations for the award

were submitted by teachers and administrators from 41 states as part of the activities celebrating National Adult and Continuing Education Week in March.

Other N.C. nominees included Walter Gantt, Sherry Modlin and Luon Phan of Hickory.

Congressman Alex McMillan, present at the award ceremony, said, "The volunteer tutors and the ABLE program in Charlotte are among my heroes. They are on the front line of this battle to overcome adult illiteracy."

Underwood said on accepting, "It is not a sin to not know how to read. But in this day and age it is a sin to do nothing about it."



When James Underwood learned to read at age 51 his life improved tremendously.

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<p>Spic And Span Cleaner 16 Oz. \$2.14</p>	<p>Eagle Ridged Potato Chips Or Brown Russet Chips 6.5 Oz. \$1.09</p>	<p>Donald Duck Orange Juice 64 Oz. \$1.39</p>	<p>Coca-Cola, Sprite, Or Diet Coke Non-Returnable 16 Oz. 6 Pk. \$1.69</p>
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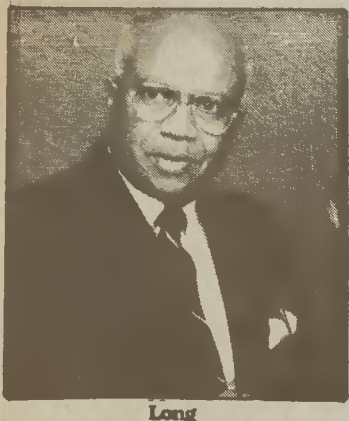
<p>Spic & Span Pine Cleaner 28 Oz. 2.09</p>	<p>Mr. Clean All Purpose Cleaner 28 Oz. 1.99</p>	<p>Kleenex Boutique Facial Tissue 100 Ct. .85</p>	<p>Post Oat Flakes 12 Oz. 1.79</p>
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Elks Make Contributions To Private Colleges

By LORA VANDERHALL
Post Staff Writer

The North Carolina State Association to the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks of the World recently made contributions of \$10,000 respectively to Livingstone College in Salisbury and Shaw University in Raleigh.

The presentation was made by North Carolina State President, Dr. Lem Long, Jr., and Mrs. Arlease Hawkins, auxiliary state president. Dr. O. K. Beatty, president of Livingstone, accepted for the college and President T. O. Shaw accepted for Shaw University.

Remarks were given by Hugo Madison, grand commission of education.

More than 150 grand district deputies, grand daughter rulers and many others from across the United States, Panama, Barbados and the Bahama Island were in attendance.

The Grand Exalted Ruler, Dr. Donald P. Wilson and Jean C. W. Smith of Philadelphia were also in attendance.

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