

Woman heads Universal Life

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—In a precedent-breaking move, the Board of Directors of Universal Life Insurance Company, meeting February 11 at the company's Memphis headquarters, elected Patricia Walker Shaw as the company's new president. Twelve new officers were also elected. Ms. Shaw, formerly Universal's Executive Vice President, becomes the third chief executive in the firm's 60-year history, and the first woman to head a major American life insurance organization.

Universal Life is the nation's fourth largest black-owned insurance company, with assets of over \$62 million and over \$610 million of insurance in force. Thirty-six branch offices service policyholders across the country.

Patricia Walker Shaw's election to the presidency was announced by retiring President A. Maceo Walker, her father, at a press conference following the board's decision. "I am very pleased that my chosen suc-

cessor is such a highly experienced and proven executive," Walker said. "A leader who knows our business from the bottom up... who has the kind of forward-looking ideas the company will need in the years ahead."

Ms. Shaw comes to the President's office after 17 years of advancement through the ranks at Universal Life.

Patricia Shaw's own development as a business leader has not gone unnoticed. Later this year she will become president of the National Insurance Association. She has served as Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank, Memphis Branch. Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander named her to the State Commission on Minority Economic Development and the Memphis/Shelby County Jobs Advisory Commission. She serves on a number of boards in her native Memphis, and is currently in her tenth year on the board of Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division.



PATRICIA W. SHAW

My husband and I did everything together. We even decided on our funeral plans together.

When John died it was much easier for me. There were so many things that had to be done. I know I carried out his wishes because we discussed them ahead of time. We even had money put aside in a special plan available through our funeral home. It was a great relief. I wish more people knew about it.

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Neighborhood grants available

by Robert Lothian

Grants of up to \$5,000 for community self-help projects are available through the Portland Bureau of Community Development "Neighborhood Self-Help Program."

Purpose of the program, according to a Bureau publication, "is to help residents of low and moderate income neighborhoods develop the capacity to help themselves by assisting neighborhood-based projects that demonstrate ways to reduce the cost of some basic need."

Projects should involve "volunteer labor, donated materials, and evidence of involvement of those neighborhood residents affected by the projects," and should "lead to a self-sustaining community based activity, or in the case of physical improvement projects, have a lasting impact on the community."

Neighborhood associations, community based and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply, according to program coordinator Dee Walsh.

The self-help grants make available "seed money" for implementing new ideas that might not otherwise have a chance, said Walsh.

"It allows groups that don't have a sophisticated structure or a paid staff a chance to get started," she said. After the first success, she said, a group may then feel capable

of taking on larger projects.

"Neighborhood groups often get started by working against something," said Walsh. The self-help program, on the other hand, "gives groups a chance to do something positive in their neighborhood," she said.

Last year's recipients, according to Walsh, were the Center for Urban Education's Shared Housing Program, North Portland Youth Service Center's Project Assist, Eliot Energy House (operated by Responsible Urban Neighborhood Technology), and the Brooklyn Community Garden.

Money for the grants is being made available through Portland's \$9 million share of federal Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) funds. HCD was created in 1974 to revitalize low-income urban communities. In Portland, \$90 million has been invested in housing, street and sidewalk improvements, planting street trees, and helping to rebuild and remodel parks.

Neighborhood self-help grant applications are available from the Bureau of Community Development, 1120 SW 5th, Rm. 1120, Portland, OR 97204. Deadline for applying is Feb. 28, and grants will be awarded by the City Council after April 1st.

Center features ethnic theater

by Brenda Braxton

The Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC) is a non-profit organization established to showcase the art of various ethnic groups year round, according to Sue Busby, Interim Director.

IFCC's goal is to give the community a chance to interact with ethnic groups and their art forms on a regular basis. Previously, ethnic art was featured only at yearly events such as Neighbor Fair and Black History Month, said Ms. Busby.

Commissioner Charles Jordan helped found IFCC. "The Commissioner has a dream that through the arts people can get to know each other," stated Ms. Busby.

IFCC features workshops, theatrical productions, classes in dance, conditioning, photography, and fine and graphic arts, along with toddler-parent pre-school classes. The fee for these classes ranges from \$10 to \$15 for a series of five classes.

IFCC has an interest in the youth. They have developed cultural programs especially geared to the seven through seventeen-year-olds.

On Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., IFCC presents the Ethnic Story Hour free of charge. Volunteers, including active and retired educators, read to youngsters from books which have been reviewed for racist and discriminatory content. A look at the artwork displayed at IFCC and a tour of the Fire House concludes the hour.

In the summer of 1983 IFCC is planning to form a student theatre group. Thirty students will be selected through auditions and fifteen scholarships will be awarded. "Students will be heavily drilled in voice, dance, and acting," said Ms. Busby. The session will last eight weeks and students will participate in two theatrical productions.

"IFCC is not a division of the Park Bureau, therefore... total support is needed from the private and corporate sectors of the public," said Ms. Busby. IFCC was given a \$430,000 Federal grant to renovate a publically owned building as a cultural facility. On June 30, 1983 IFCC's funding runs out. We need people for fundraising projects and sponsors to make donations, she added.

sears

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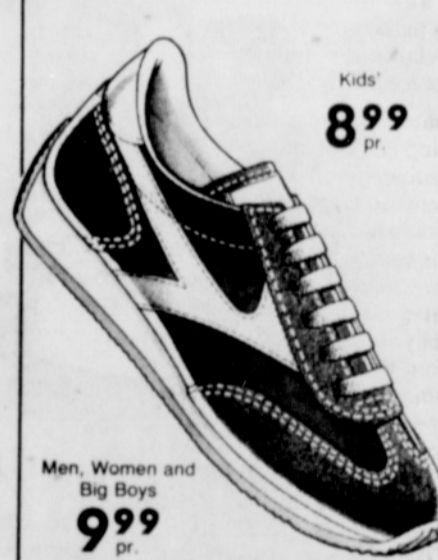
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